

Vayikra

When the ArtScroll Tanach Series began to take shape in its early it was called 'the most significant and ambitious English-language Torah project in history.' The years have borne out that assessment, and it has been reinforced by the public clamor for the resumption of the commentary on the Torah, after a hiatus of several years.

Like its predecessors and those that will follow, this volume remains unalterably and unapologetically committed to the Rabbinic tradition that accompanied the Written Torah from Mount Sinai to the present day. The commentary draws from two thousand years of written Rabbinic literature, from the Talmud and Midrash to the contemporary masters. Simultaneously, the commentary seeks to prod the reader to pursue his own research.

The original translation is faithful to *Rashi*, the 'Father of Commentators,' in attempting to convey the elegance and depth of the text in contemporary, lucid English. The Overviews present a *Hashkafah*-Perspective of the subject matter by drawing upon a broad range of chassidic, mussar-ethical, and exegetical masterpieces to create a background of depth and beauty, that helps clarify the ideas of the Torah and their bearing on life itself.

The commentary to *Vayikra/Leviticus* has been shortened from the *Bereishis/Genesis* model. The goals are the same and the accuracy is on the same high level, but it is less exhaustive. This commentary, including charts, diagrams, and introductions to the technical chapters, is a breakthrough in making *Leviticus* — the most complex of the Books of *Chumash* — more accessible to the English reader.

Many have commented over the years that ArtScroll commentaries should be translated into Hebrew, a language in which they have no equal. We are hopeful that will agree that the new ArtScroll *Vayikra/Leviticus* is deserving of that accolade.

The ArtScroll Tanach Series

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ArtScroll Tanach Series®

A traditional commentary on the Books of the Bible

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Rabbis Nosson Scherman/Meir Zlotowitz
General Editors

Vayikra

**LEVITICUS / A NEW TRANSLATION WITH
A COMMENTARY ANTHOLOGIZED FROM TAL-
MUDIC, MIDRASHIC AND RABBINIC SOURCES.**

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Vol. I

ויקרא VAYIKRA

צו TZAV

שמיני SHEMINI

תזריע TAZRIA

מצורע METZORA

ספר ויקרא

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Rabbis Nosson Scherman and Hersh Goldwurm

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Rabbi Nosson Scherman

Summary of the Laws of Korbanos by

Rabbis Yehezkel Danziger and Hersh Goldwurm

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שושן פורים תשמ"ט

... וכתר שם טוב עולה על גביהם
... the crown of a good name
surpasses them all (Avos 4:17)

This volume is dedicated
in honor of

Edward and Phyllis Chernoff

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With warmth and charm —
and by personal example — they draw others to Torah.*

Rabbi Avrohom Ausband
Rosh Hayeshiva

Yeshiva Telshe Alumni
Riverdale, N.Y.
Shushan Purim, 5749

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*An Overview —
The Eternal Offering Service*

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❧ Publisher's Preface

In the several years that have elapsed since the completion of the multi-volume ArtScroll *Bereishis/Genesis*, there have been constant requests for the return of the Chumash commentary. We are proud to accede to these requests and to acknowledge the heartwarming interest of so many people. Despite unanimous approval of the very extensive nature of the commentary, we felt that in this work a broad range of people would benefit from a less detailed approach, but one that would still provide the reader with a full sweep of the subject matter, including the views of the major commentators, the exposition of nuances and meaning of difficult words and phrases, and homiletic insights of the classic interpreters. The reader will quickly note that this new approach is less voluminous than the previous one, but will soon agree that it, too, is unique in its comprehensiveness. As a general rule, the commentary in this volume follows the goals set forth in the previous volumes of the Chumash. We are confident that the great majority of people will find it extremely valuable, and even the most discerning will find that it is filled with material that is new and valuable.

Leviticus/Vayikra is the most complex of the Books of Moses, and contains more halachah and less narrative than any of the others. While this is not intended as a halachic work, and the reader is urged not to use it as such, the very nature of the Book requires that its commentary be based in great measure on *Sifra*, the halachic Midrash to *Vayikra*, and *Rambam*. It is our hope that this work will be of equal value to scholars seeking clarification of the Book's many difficult passages as to the reader who seeks a good understanding of the general subject matter.

This treatment of Chumash is a forerunner of a future one-volume Chumash, which will be suitable for synagogue use as well as for more convenient personal study. Seldom have we received so many requests for any work as for such a one-volume Chumash. We look forward to the time, relatively soon, when we can make such a work available as a companion volume to the ArtScroll Siddur.

We are fortunate that RABBI HERSH GOLDWURM has collaborated in the writing of the work. Rabbi Goldwurm wrote the draft upon which the commentary was based and then crafted and refined the finished product. The completed work bears the stamp of his remarkable scholarship and grasp of the fullness of Torah. Well known as a brilliant scholar with an unusual ability to grasp and present the broad sweep of a topic without losing essential details, Rabbi Goldwurm continues the high standard of scholarship and commentary that he displayed in his previous ArtScroll works. It is a further credit to him and a service to the Torah public that he has now turned his abundant talents to the commentary of Chumash.

RABBI YEHEZKEL DANZIGER has contributed a valuable summary on the laws and procedures of offerings. Most of the material is based on the pathfinding commentaries on Mishnah *Zevachim* and *Menachos*, which he edited and to which he contributed similar introductions. To those who seek a more thorough knowledge of the subject of the offerings, we recommend the above and the other Mishnah volumes in *Kodashim*, the order that deals with the laws of the Temple and the offerings, which are the main subjects of *Leviticus*.

It remains a source of great pride that so many of the great leaders of the previous generation gave warm encouragement and guidance to our work from the time of its inception. Among them were the *geonim* and *tzaddikim*, *Maran Harav* MOSHE FEINSTEIN, *Maran Harav* YAAKOV KAMENETZKY, *Maran Harav* GEDALIAH SCHORR, and *Maran Harav* SHNEUR KOTLER זצ"ל. We treasure the friendship and guidance of *Maran Harav* MORDECHAI GIFTER שליט"א, who has been an indispensable source of support and advice since our formative years.

Hagaon Harav DAVID FEINSTEIN has been available for guidance and counsel at every possible moment. We are also fortunate to have been able to draw upon the support and knowledge of *Hagaon Harav* DAVID COHEN and *Hagaon Harav* HILLEL DAVID.

RABBI SHEAH BRANDER, our friend, colleague, and the epitome of craftsmanship in the demanding field of design and graphics, has once more performed a service to the Torah by presenting it in an outer shell worthy of its inner beauty. It is the nature of his field that its most expert work is often apparent only to fellow experts. They are Reb Sheah's greatest admirers.

RABBI AVIE GOLD has done his usual meticulous reading and provided erudite comments and questions to the manuscript. Every book benefits from his care and knowledge. MICHAEL HOREN contributed his artistic skills to the illustrations and diagrams.

We are grateful to all those who participated in the typing and proofreading of this work: MRS. ESTHER FEIERSTEIN, MRS. MENUCHA SILVER, ZISSI GLATZER, BASSIE GOLDSTEIN, MRS. JUDIDICK, and MRS. FAIGIE WEINBAUM. We are also grateful to the entire staff of Mesorah Publications, whose constant cooperation makes it possible for such ambitious works to be undertaken and brought to fruition: MENACHEM BROGNA, YOSEF GESSER, RABBI SHIMON GOLDING, YOSEF TIMINSKY, MICHAEL ZIVITZ, LEA FREIER, SHEILA TENNENBAUM, and FAIGIE ZLOTOWITZ.

Our colleague SHMUEL BLITZ, director of ArtScroll/Jerusalem, remains a trusted adviser as well as the driving force behind our growing operation in Israel.

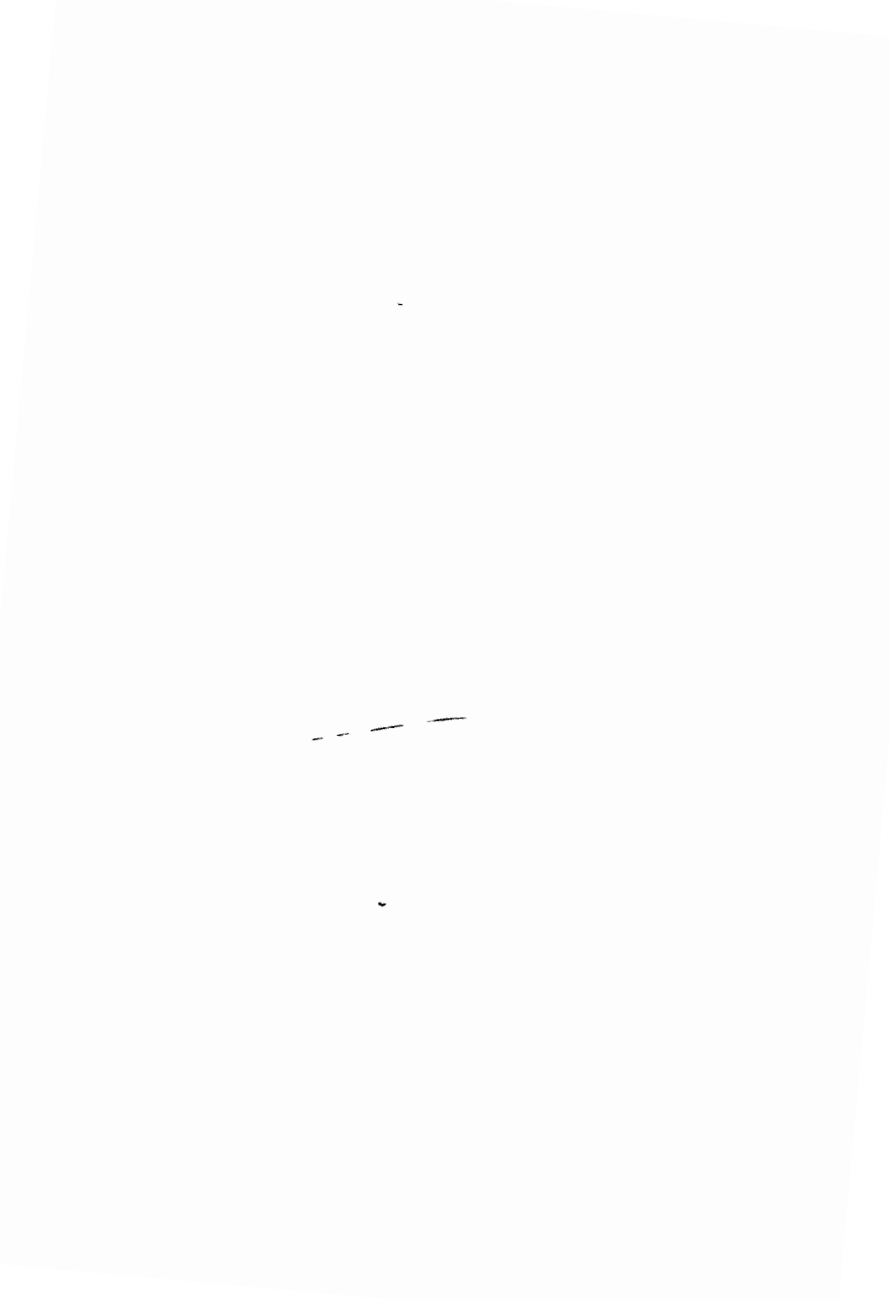
Our families, and especially our wives, have often been required to step aside so that the work on the Chumash and all the other books in the Series could continue unhindered. Always they have put the work ahead of themselves, cognizant of the primary responsibility to the cause of *harbatzas HaTorah*. May we all share in Torah *nachas* and the continued ability to share in this greatest of all missions.

Finally, we express our profound gratitude to *Hashem Yisborach* for permitting us the inestimable privilege of being the quill that records His Word. May we and our distinguished colleagues be worthy of this exalted task.

Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz / Rabbi Nosson Scherman

General Editors

מחזור חורש אדר ב' תשמט / March 8, 1989



An Overview — The Eternal Offering Service

אמר אברהם . . . „רבנו של עולם שמא חס ושלום ישראל חוטאים לפניך ואתה עושה להם כדור המבול וכדור הפלגה.“ . . . אמר לו „קחה לי עגלה משולשת . . . אמר לפניו „. . . תיגח בזמן שבית המקדש קיים בזמן שאין בית המקדש קיים מה תהא עליהם?“ אמר לו „כבר תקנתי להם סדר קרבנות. כל זמן שקוראין בהן מעלה אני עליהן כאילו מקריבין לפני קרבן ומוחל אני על כל עונותיהם.“

Abraham said . . . “Master of the universe, perhaps, Heaven forbid, Israel may sin before You and You will do to them as to the Generation of the Flood and the Generation of the Dispersion.”

[God] said to him, “Bring Me three heifers . . .” [as if to say that the offerings will atone for them (Rashi).]

[Abraham] said, “. . . This is well and good when the Temple is standing. What will become of them when the Temple is not standing?”

[God] said, “I have already established for them the הקרבנות, the Order of the Offerings [that is recited as part of the daily prayers]. Whenever they will recite them I will regard it as if they were bringing Me an offering, and I will forgive all their sins.” (Megillah 31b)

I. The Sanctuary*

A Home for the Shechinah **T**he Book of Exodus concluded with Israel's achievement of the goal for which it was liberated: the erection of a Tabernacle that could serve as a resting place among them for the *Shechinah*, God's

* The first section of the Overview is drawn primarily from the thought of Rabbi Gedalya Schorr, in *Or Gedalyahu*.

The handiwork of mortal Jews had become worthy to be a home for the Divine Presence.

Presence. The climax of *Exodus* is the statement that the glory of God filled the Tabernacle. How awesome! — the handiwork of mortal Jews had become worthy to be a home for the Divine Presence. So great was the holiness that rested upon their Tabernacle, that even Moses could not enter (*Exodus* 40:34-35).

What was the purpose of the Tabernacle, the goal that Israel achieved in creating it?

It was fitting for holy people to have a central place where God's Presence could rest among them.

In introducing the commandment that the Jewish people contribute toward the erection of the Tabernacle (*Exodus* ch. 25), *Ramban* explains its purpose. Israel had stood at Sinai and heard the Ten Commandments, the highlights of the Torah's commandments, and they had made a covenant to be God's Chosen People. God had charged them with the responsibility to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (*Exodus* 19:6), so it was fitting for holy people to have a central place where God's Presence could rest among them.

As *Rabbeinu Yonah* puts it:

כי עיקר מה שקדשנו השי"ת בתורתו ובמצותיו והבדילנו להיות לו לעם כדי לקדשו וליראה ממנו ראוי שיהיו מקרישיו קדושים, בשגם וזבלים שעובדים בהם לפני השי"ת צריכים להיות קדש.
Since the main reason that God, Blessed is He, sanctified us with His Torah and commandments, and segregated us to be His people is to sanctify and revere Him, it is proper that those who sanctify Him should themselves be holy, just as the utensils with which they serve Him must be holy (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 3:158).

Dream and Reality

It is illustrative that *R' Yonah* compares the Jewish people to the utensils of the Sanctuary, because it helps us understand our function in the Divine scheme. Not only God's "home", but His servants must be holy, just as the angels who serve Him above are holy.

The focal point of the Tabernacle is the אֲרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ, *Holy Ark*, the repository of the לוחות הברית, *Tablets of*

the Covenant. When Moses gave the instructions about the erection of the Tabernacle, he mentioned the Ark before anything else, because it was from there that God would speak to him (ibid. 25:22), thus maintaining the Divine contact with Israel that had begun on Mount Sinai. At first glance, it would seem incongruous to build an Ark when there was no building as yet in which to house it. Betzalel, the builder of the Tabernacle, had the same question. Quite logically he asked, "Moses, our teacher, it is the universal practice that first someone builds a house and then he puts in furniture, yet you say, 'Make me an Ark, utensils, [and then] a Tabernacle?' " Then Betzalel surmised that Moses had not conveyed the Divine command in the order in which God had issued it. He said, "Perhaps *this* is what God told you: 'Make a Tabernacle, an Ark, and [finally] utensils.' "

"Perhaps you were
in God's shadow!"
Moses suggested
that Betzalel might
have overheard
God's command
regarding the
Tabernacle,

Moses agreed, saying, "[Your name is Betzalel, which spells the words *בְּצַל אֵל*, in God's shadow]. Perhaps you were in God's shadow!" Moses suggested that Betzalel might have overheard God's command regarding the Tabernacle, for that, indeed, was the order in which God had instructed him to construct the Tabernacle (*Berachos* 55a).

The narrative implies that Moses deliberately reversed the order of God's command. God had commanded that the Tabernacle be built *before* the Ark — in the *practical* way — but Moses changed the order when he conveyed the instructions to Betzalel. Why did he do so?

Let us imagine a husband and wife sitting down to plan their dream home. They want a *seforim*-lined study, where the children and their father will be able to learn and grow; a dining room where Sabbath and festival meals will be an adventure in spiritual and temporal joy; extra rooms where guests can be made welcome, a modern airy kitchen where a homemaker's tasks will be eased. All the things that make a house into a dream home.

*Practical people
look at things dif-
ferently. They are
unimpressed by
dream rooms.*

Then they meet the professionals who will bring their dream into reality — and they are in for a surprise. Practical people look at things differently. They are unimpressed by dream rooms. They are concerned with the reality of land, financing, zoning, plans, blueprints, approvals. "When the shell of your house is up, you can finish the rooms as you wish. That will be the time to arrange for bookcases and furniture. Now is not the time for aesthetics. Now is the time to build. First things first!"

*The builder talks
practicality; the
parents talk goals.*

Who is right? Both are! A builder sees the broad picture and he knows that there can be no rooms without a foundation and a shell. The parents know it, too, but they have a different vision. To them, the purpose of their house is to fulfill their dream of a place to raise a family, not as a means to help the economy, provide a livelihood for architects, builders, civil servants, decorators, and gardeners. The builder talks practicality; the parents talk goals.

*As a builder
Betzalel was
certainly right;
but Moses the
teacher was right
in a more
meaningful way.*

So, too, Moses and Betzalel. Betzalel the builder knew that there must be a Tabernacle before there can be furnishings. Moses had a different vision, and it was no less realistic. Moses wanted a Tabernacle as the repository of the Tablets, thereby declaring the centrality and primacy of Torah, and making Israel worthy of God's Presence. In first issuing God's commandment about the Ark, he expressed the concept described by the author of *L'chah Dodi*, who praises the Sabbath as *סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה*, *last in deed, but first in thought*. Even though the Sabbath was the last part of Creation to come into being, it was foremost in God's design. Sabbath as the holiest day in the calendar, as the day that proclaims God as Master and Builder of the universe, is the highlight of the week, the day that gives meaning to all the other days. It comes last not as an afterthought, but as a climax.

As a builder Betzalel was certainly right; the Tabernacle had to be complete before the Ark was built. But Moses the teacher was right in a more

meaningful way, for Betzalel's Tabernacle would have had no meaning without Moses' Ark.

Moses alluded to this when he said that Betzalel was "in God's shadow" when the commandment was given. Betzalel was right only because he did not perceive the full glow of God's intent. Yes, the material world demands that one pour foundations and build walls before doing anything else, but one pours and builds them only because one needs them for the sake of more important things.

Extension of Sinai

That was why God commanded that a Sanctuary be built: so that the revelation of Sinai would remain a permanent fixture of the Jewish experience.

Ramban concludes that the "secret", i.e., the essence of the Tabernacle, was that the glory that had rested so manifestly on Mount Sinai would rest unobtrusively on the Tabernacle, as the Torah says of it upon its completion, *And the glory of HASHEM filled the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:34)*. That was why God commanded that a Sanctuary be built: so that the revelation of Sinai would remain a permanent fixture of the Jewish experience.

But even that exalted state was less than Israel should have had.

To the commandment that Israel erect the Tabernacle, Sforno (*Exodus 25:9*) comments that God wanted it "so that I shall dwell in your midst to speak with you and receive the prayers and service of Israel, not as it was before the [Golden] Calf, as it says, *בְּכֹל הַמָּקוֹם, אֲשֶׁר אֶזְכֹּר אֶת שְׁמִי* [אָבוֹא אֵלַיךְ], *in every place [where I will cause My Name to be recalled] I will come to you ... (Exodus 20:21).*"

the Revelation at Sinai made every Jew a worthy bearer of the Shechinah.

But then came the sin of the Golden Calf — and Israel was not the same anymore.

Sforno draws a contrast between Israel's standing before and after Sinai. In his view, the Revelation at Sinai made every Jew a worthy bearer of the *Shechinah*. In such a state of national elevation, no Tabernacle was necessary; the entire nation was worthy of God's Presence. Every member of the nation was a miniature Tabernacle. But then came the sin of the Golden Calf — and Israel was not the same anymore. No longer was each individual Jew capable

of being host to the *Shechinah*. That was when it became necessary for God to ordain that the people share in the construction of a new, national Sanctuary, one that could salvage what they had lost. No longer would God come to *every place* where an individual Jew called out to Him; collectively, however, the nation would have God in its midst. This is why the commandment to build the Tabernacle took effect only after the sin of the Golden Calf.

The presence of the Torah was even more crucial, in view of the Temple's function as the bearer of the Sinaitic revelation.

Thus, the Tabernacle's purpose was to bring Mount Sinai to the nation. The pinnacle of the Sinai experience was the Giving of the Torah, and the heart of the Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies, which housed the Ark. Surely it is true that the sacrificial service caused the *Shechinah* to rest upon the Tabernacle, but not the sacrificial service alone. The presence of the Torah was even more crucial, in view of the Temple's function as the bearer of the Sinaitic revelation. This was reflected by the very name of the Temple Mount, הַר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, *Mount Moriah*, because מִשָּׁם תֵּצֵא הוֹרָאָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, *from there the law would go forth to Israel* (Yerushalmi, Berachos 4:5). The Sanhedrin was stationed on the Temple Mount in close proximity to the Temple, because a Temple without the Torah, as embodied in the Sanhedrin, would be lacking.

In this light, we can better understand Ramban's definition of the goal of the Exodus from Egypt.

Return Home

... והנה הגלות איננו נשלם עד יום שובם אל מקומם ואל מעלת אבותם ישובו, וכשיצאו ממצרים אף על פי שיצאו מבית עבדים עדיין יחשבו גולים כי היו בארץ לא להם נבונים במדבר, וכשבאו אל הר סיני ועשו המשכן ושב הקדוש ברוך הוא והשרה שכינתו ביניהם אז שבו אל מעלת אבותם שהיה סוד אלוה על אהליהם והם הם המרכבה ... ואז נחשבו גאולים.
... The [Egyptian] exile was not completed until the day they [Israel] returned to their

place and returned to the eminence of their forefathers. When they left Egypt, even though they left the house of slavery, they were still considered exiles, because they were in a land not their own, confounded in the Wilderness. When they arrived at Mount Sinai and made the Tabernacle, and the Holy One, Blessed is He, returned and rested His *Shechinah* among them — then they returned to the eminence of their forefathers who had God's secret upon their tents, and who were themselves the "chariot" [i.e., the bearers] of His *Shechinah*. Then, finally, they were considered redeemed (*Ramban*, Introduction to *Exodus*).

Israel had been rid forever of Egypt and its bondage, but it was not rid of the vestiges of exile.

As *Ramban* perceives it, the exile did not end with the Ten Plagues nor even with the Splitting of the Sea. Israel had been rid forever of Egypt and its bondage, but it was not rid of the vestiges of exile. Amalek was conquered and every man, woman, and child heard God's voice at Sinai, but still the exile was not over. Only when the Tabernacle was built and the nation collectively became the "chariot" of the *Shechinah* could they finally be considered redeemed.

In *Ramban's* words, "they returned to the eminence of their forefathers who had God's secret upon their tents." What was this secret?

These blessings of Sarah paralleled the miracles of the Tabernacle and the Temple.

Sarah's home had extraordinary qualities. Above her tent was a cloud of holiness, there was a blessing in her dough that kept it fresh and satisfying, and her Sabbath lamp remained burning all week long. These miracles stopped when she died, and they resumed when Rebecca took Sarah's place as the next Matriarch of Israel (*Rashi* to *Genesis* 24:67). These blessings of Sarah paralleled the miracles of the Tabernacle and the Temple. The cloud represented God's Presence; the blessed dough was like the לחם הפנים, *show bread*, which remained warm and fresh from Sabbath to

Sabbath; and the flame was like the *נר מערבי*, *western lamp* of the Menorah, whose flame burned bright until the moment of the next day's lighting. Sarah's tent was a temple of holiness, and, had it not been for the sin of the Golden Calf, every Jewish tent would have been that sort of temple. Had Israel not slid from its eminence, the Book of *Exodus* could have ended then, because the people would have returned "to the eminence of their forefathers who had God's secret upon their tents." Individually, they could not maintain that lofty status, but as a nation they were able to unite and create a Tabernacle that could replicate the holiness of old.

As a nation they were able to unite and create a Tabernacle that could replicate the holiness of old.

R' Hirsch notes that the *Shechinah* symbolized the symmetry between Mount Sinai and the Tabernacle. In describing God's Presence on Mount Sinai, the Torah says *וַיִּשְׁכֵּן כְּבוֹד־ה' עַל־הָר סיני וַיִּכְסְהוּ הָעָנָן*, *The glory of HASHEM rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it* (*Exodus* 24:16). When the Tabernacle was completed, God signified that His will had been done in the same way: *וַיִּכַּס הָעָנָן אֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּכְבוֹד ה' מְלֵא*, *The cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of HASHEM filled the Tabernacle* (*ibid.* 40:34). A cloud of glory covered Sinai and a cloud of glory covered the Tabernacle. In a sense, the Tabernacle had taken the place of the Revelation, to bear its message to all future generations. This was God's plan of revelation, as the Psalmist says: *ה' בָּם סיני בְּקֶרֶשׁ*, *the Lord is among them, Sinai is in the Sanctuary* (*Psalms* 68:18).

In a sense, the Tabernacle had taken the place of the Revelation, to bear its message to all future generations.

Then — God's call came to Moses (*Leviticus* 1:1). He was to enter and learn what the Jewish people must do to maintain the Sinai-nature of the new Tabernacle. How does one maintain this exalted status once he has been privileged to reach it? The answer was in the sacrificial service, which forms the first seven chapters of *Leviticus*. This illustrates the vital role of the offerings in Torah life, and it is from this background that we must attempt to understand their lesson and significance.

How does one maintain this exalted status once he has been privileged to reach it? The answer was in the sacrificial service.

II. The Purpose of Offerings*

Misunderstood Word

God finds no satisfaction in inflicting pain or deprivation upon His children.

The word קָרְבָּן is commonly translated either *sacrifice* or *offering*, but the truth is that the English language does not possess a word that accurately expresses the concept contained in the word. The word *sacrifice* implies that the person bringing it is required to deprive himself of something in order to satisfy someone else's need or caprice — but God finds no satisfaction in inflicting pain or deprivation upon His children. The word *offering* is closer to the mark — indeed, we use it in our translation for lack of a better one — but it too fails to convey the true meaning of a *korban*. *Offering* implies that the Recipient of the gift must be appeased, that He requires a tribute that will somehow assuage His wrath or make Him receptive to the entreaties of a supplicant, or that He has a need that can only be satisfied by someone other than Himself. As if God required our gifts! אִם-צִדְקָתְךָ מַה-תִּתֶּנּוּ לֹו, *If you have acted righteously, what will you have given Him?* (Job 35:7); God does not become enriched by man's largesse.

The root of קָרְבָּן is קָרַב, to come near. The person bringing an offering does so in order to come closer to God.

What then is the purpose of the offerings? The Hebrew word itself provides the answer. The root of קָרְבָּן is קָרַב, *to come near*. The person bringing an offering does so in order to come closer to God, to elevate his level of spirituality (R' Hirsch).

Let us explore how this is done, through the eyes of some of the classic commentators.

Not to Steal

In introducing the commandments of the offerings, the Torah speaks of the person bringing it as אָדָם, a word that is one of the terms for man, but is also the name of Adam, the first man. The Sages derive from Torah's choice of words that just as Adam did not bring offerings from stolen property — because the whole world was his — so you shall not bring

* This section of the Overview is drawn primarily from *Sh'lah HaKadosh*.

*It was not a matter
of choice or virtue
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offerings from stolen property (*Vayikra Rabbah* 2:7). But this lesson from Adam would seem to be incongruous. It was not a matter of choice or virtue that Adam avoided offerings from tainted sources — from whom could he steal? All the living creatures were his. To say that we should emulate him in this regard is like saying that Aaron set an example for us by not performing the Temple service with three hands. One does not draw lessons from the impossible. What, therefore, is the Torah teaching us through this comparison with Adam?

*His livelihood
would come in
return for his
obedience to
God's will.*

When Adam was deposited in the Garden of Eden, his first responsibility was *לַעֲבֹדָה וּלְשָׁמְרָה*, *to work it and guard it* (Genesis 2:15). In its simple sense, the term means that Adam was commanded to plant, work, cultivate — everything that was necessary to keep the Garden as a Paradise. *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* (ch. 12) comments otherwise. In the era before Adam's sin, man had no need to be a peasant; everything grew for him at God's command, with no need for him to exert himself in any way. It was only after his sin that he was expelled from Eden and required to earn his bread through the sweat of his brow. How then was he to *work and guard* Eden? Through the study of Torah and the performance of positive and negative commandments. His livelihood would come in return for his obedience to God's will. Does this seem strange? Not at all. One of the hidden miracles of Creation, even after Adam's sin, is that God responds to man's righteousness by blessing his material efforts (see comm. to 26:3-13).

Sh'lah HaKadosh offers a Kabbalistic interpretation to Adam's responsibilities, an interpretation that sheds light on the reason for offerings.

The word *לַעֲבֹדָה* is a reference to the *עֲבֹדָה*, *sacrificial service* of the Temple. Adam's mission was to make *himself* an offering in his lifetime, by dedicating himself unreservedly to God. On God's Throne of Glory, there is an image of a man (*Ezekiel*

1:10). Every human being has his own image above, his ideal spiritual self, which represents his goal and his potential. Man's soul is placed in an earthly body so that he can surmount the challenges of material life and raise himself up to his personal, heavenly self; to unite his earthly self with his higher self. Just as everyone has a body and a soul, and his mission is to triumph in the eternal struggle of body versus soul, so, too, man must struggle to live up to the summons of his higher self.

Whatever man is, he is often inconsistent, he knows that he is far from living up to his inner image.

Every man lives with many personal dichotomies. If he is religious he believes in God, yet he sins! How can he defy the Creator he believes in? He is kind and generous, yet he is sometimes mean spirited and tight fisted. He is moral, but he has lapses. Whatever man is, he is often inconsistent, and if he is honest with himself, he knows that he is far from living up to his inner image. He wants his body to come closer to his soul; on yet a higher level, he should also want his soul to live up to its counterpart on high.

There is a higher ideal we must seek to capture in our mundane lives.

In a similar vein, the Sages speak of a *Bais Hamikdash* in heaven that corresponds to the *Bais Hamikdash* on earth. The masters of Kabbalah teach that the good deeds of Jews accumulate to build a spiritual replica of that heavenly Temple, and when there are enough such good deeds, the heavenly Temple will come down to the Temple Mount, signaling the end of the exile and the beginning of the perfect world foretold by the prophets. This is the collective counterpart to the striving of the individual soul. There is a higher ideal we must seek to capture in our mundane lives. As the Kotzker Rebbe expressed it pithily on the verse, *As for the heavens — the heavens are HASHEM's, but the earth He has given to mankind* (*Psalms* 115:16): The heavens are already heavenly — God does not need man to improve upon them. But He has given us the earth that we might make it heavenly, as well. It is in this sense that Adam was not to steal for his offerings. *He* was the offering, and for him to

The truest offering is when the owner brings himself as the offering.

devote anything less than his maximum to God would have been to steal his Divinely conferred potential and misappropriate it for himself. Indeed, the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge was such a misappropriation, because — however he would rationalize his deed (see comm. and Overview to ArtScroll *Genesis*) — he would be flouting the will of God. Following this line of reasoning, many commentators understand this concept as the essence of the verse **אָדָם-כִּי יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם קָרְבָן לַיהוָה**, which means literally *When a man among you brings an offering to HASHEM* (1:2). This is interpreted to mean that the truest offering is when the owner brings *himself* as the offering — the *man among you* is the offering — meaning that the owner negates himself to God, making himself and his desires subservient to the teachings and guidelines of the Torah. As we shall see below, the symbolism of offerings is based on this concept: that the animal is secondary; that it is but an indication of what its owner feels and toward what he strives.

Creation's Three Parts

Sefer Yetzirah propounds a theme that has become basic in the world of Torah thought. There are three aspects to all parts of Creation, from the cosmos to the individual human being: **עוֹלָם, שָׁנָה, נֶפֶשׁ**, *world or space; year or time; and soul or spiritual essence*. This means that people must attempt to inject sanctity into: (a) their physical surroundings; (b) the changing seasons and conditions of life; and (c) the spirituality and intelligence with which they approach decisions. The offerings combine all three of these concepts:

At first, Adam was the offering, in the sense that he made himself correspond to his heavenly ideal.

At first, Adam was the offering, in the sense that he made himself correspond to his heavenly ideal. After his sin, animals became the agency through which man was to strive to regain the spiritual standing that Adam had, and then lost. Each succeeding era of human failure was punctuated by offerings, to signify the beginning of a renewed desire for redemption and elevation. After his fall, Adam brought an offering

(*Avodah Zarah* 8a); after the Flood, which climaxed the failure of the ten generations from Adam to Noah, Noah brought an offering (*Genesis* 8:20); and after the failure of the ten generations between Noah and Abraham, Abraham was chosen, and he brought an offering (*ibid.* 12:7).

The successive failures of humanity resulted in new starting points, and new leaders in mankind's spiritual trek.

These three offerings suggest the same theme. Man's failure to live up to his higher mission does not mean that he has lost all hope. Sometimes a person must step back before he can begin to move forward again. The successive failures of humanity resulted in new starting points, and new leaders in mankind's spiritual trek. From Adam to Noah to Abraham — and each time the new beginning was marked with an offering.

The Revelation at Sinai marked another new era, a higher one, as the Jewish nation ascended to the august level that Adam had once occupied. That was the spiritual plateau at which, as *Sforno* describes it, every Jew was a Sanctuary, and no central Tabernacle was needed. But then the nation faltered and made the Golden Calf: Again, man had fallen, and the attempt to rise up after the fall was signified by an offering and the designation of a new leader in the struggle upward. This time the pathfinder was Aaron and his family of Kohanim, and the vehicle was the Tabernacle, which became the new place where offerings would be brought.

The Tabernacle service would forever remain the vehicle to the final achievement of the goal for which God had created Adam.

The Tabernacle service would forever remain the vehicle to the final achievement of the goal for which God had created Adam. There would be lapses to be sure. The Temple would be destroyed once and then again. There would be an agonizingly long exile. But despite all that, the prophets spoke of a redemption which would restore the Temple. Even during the exile, the prayers and Torah study of the nation would take the place of the offerings (see below). Always the offerings, in whatever form — they would represent man's striving to dedicate World, Year and Soul to God.

Sanctuary's Three Parts

No foreign, hostile winds could succeed in dispersing man's striving to elevate himself to God.

World is represented by the sites of the Tabernacle and the Temple, for they were the holiest places on earth.

Time is represented by the offerings.

Soul is represented by Aaron and his offspring.

These three elements of Creation — World, Year, and Soul — would be eternally symbolized by the service of the offerings, and whether it would be in the Temple or in the Torah and prayer service of exile, nothing could destroy it. As the Mishnah teaches, one of the ten miracles in the Temple was that *לֹא נִצְחָה אֶת עַמּוּד הָעֵשָׁן*, *the wind did not disperse the vertical column of smoke [from the Altar] (Avos 5:7)*. The word for *smoke* is *עֵשָׁן*, which is the initials of *עוֹלָם, שָׁנָה, נֶפֶשׁ*, *World, Year, and Soul*. In addition to its literal meaning, the Sages' dictum teaches that no foreign, hostile winds could succeed in dispersing man's striving to elevate himself to God, as the smoke from his offerings ascends upward. True, Tabernacles and Temples would be destroyed, but man remains, Israel remains, the task of living up to the demands of the Torah remains.

עוֹלָם, World, is represented by the sites of the Tabernacle and the Temple, for they were the holiest places on earth, the places that could justify Creation, if they were utilized as God wished them to be. *שָׁנָה, Year or Time*, is represented by the offerings themselves, for they revolve around time. The animals must be of certain prescribed ages, some are brought daily at specified times; additional ones on New Moons, Sabbaths, and festivals; at times when people are to cleanse themselves from *tumah* [i.e., ritual impurity], and when they seek atonement from particular sins. *נֶפֶשׁ, Soul*, is represented by Aaron and his offspring, the exalted men who were chosen to be the emissaries of the nation in performing the service.

In another sense, these three concepts represent the three great progenitors of mankind, Adam, Noah, and Abraham, whom the Torah mentions as those who brought offerings. Adam represents *World*, because the whole world was created for his sake and it was within his power to realize its spiritual purpose by fulfilling the commandment to maintaining the sanctity of Eden. Noah represented *Time*, because he saw

the changes that took place in the world, the “before and after” the Flood, which changed the entire nature of the world and man. This phenomenon is perhaps most graphically clear to us from the simple fact that human life spans shrank so dramatically after the Flood. And Abraham represents *Soul*, because he became the embodiment of all that was spiritually good and noble.

III. Reasons for the Offerings

Understanding Reality

They are reality, even though we have never seen them and have no personal experience through which to know their potency.

Even the most original human ideas are formed of things we are familiar with. They are new arrangements of the familiar, new insights into things we know.

Admittedly, the function and purpose of the offerings are not concepts that man can grasp rationally. Especially in modern times when anything not measurable, observable, replicable is questioned and rudely denied, the idea of offerings is not an easy one to purvey. It is necessary, therefore, to understand that they and their efficacy are manifestations of God’s plan and wisdom. They *are* reality, even though we have never seen them and have no personal experience through which to know their potency.

Kuzari explains it this way. We know that certain combinations of ingredients produce certain results. The scientist can produce water by combining hydrogen and oxygen. A chef can delight multitudes through the proper mix of ingredients. And the same is true of artisans and engineers, musicians and word-smiths, thinkers and theologians. Even the most original human ideas are formed of things we are familiar with. The results may be breathtaking and we may call them miracles, but we realize that they are not supernatural; they are new arrangements of the familiar, new insights into things we know.

Offerings, too, are devices by which material and animal life can be utilized for great purposes — but we cannot understand them because the results are truly supernatural. We cannot understand why the slaughter of a sanctified animal, the placing of its blood and

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skeptical. But they
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the burning of its flesh on the Altar — why these acts should bring God's Presence down to earth. Had the Jewish people been asked about the possibility of this happening *before* they had seen it, perhaps even they would have been skeptical. *But they saw it happen!* They saw the cloud of God's glory descend upon the Tent of Meeting. They saw a heavenly fire descend to their Altar and remain there for hundreds of years. They saw a Divine glow on Moses' face. To them, these were demonstrable, visible, tangible facts.

Incomprehensible to our rational, scientific minds? Surely. But so was the splitting of the atom to equally rational minds a hundred years ago, or "flying ships" two hundred years ago, or inoculation three hundred years ago when rational people were still treating disease with leeches.

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Various reasons for the offerings are given by the classic commentators. To be sure, as *Ritva* writes, the reason for the offerings is so profound that, in its entirety, it is beyond human comprehension and the best efforts of our greatest thinkers can yield only a drop in the ocean of God's intent (*Sefer Zikaron*). Nevertheless, many of the great commentators have offered reasons. Here are some of them, as they are explained by *Sh'lah* and others:

Substitute Ibn Ezra and Ramban: for Man

The offerings
elevate the three
parts of every
human deed:
מחשבה רביר
ומעשה
speech, and action.

The offerings elevate the three parts of every human deed: מחשבה רביר ומעשה, *thought, speech, and action*. When a person sins and then brings an offering, all three of those elements are used to take the sinful use to which he had previously put them, and transform it into the instrument of doing God's will. The person bringing the offering performs the commandment of קמיקה, *leaning*, by placing his hands on its head and leaning on it, thereby dedicating his strength and activity to God. He purifies his thoughts and intentions, by confessing his sin, pronouncing the spiritual goal that he hopes to attain, or uttering praises of God.

While this is done
with a person's
offering, he meditates
upon his sin.

He contemplates
that justice would
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his blood be placed
upon it.

To further symbolize that he means to purge his sinful thoughts, the innards of the animal — representing the human organs that are the seat of desire and thought — are burned on God's Altar. In the case of an elevation-offering, which is completely burned, the animal's feet symbolize the hands and feet with which man ran and acted with alacrity to defy his Maker. The animal's blood, representing the haven of man's soul, is placed upon the Altar. While this is done with a person's offering, he meditates upon his sin, for the service teaches him graphically that he has sinned against God with body and soul. He contemplates that justice would have dictated that his body be burned on the Altar and his blood be placed upon it. It is only God's graciousness that permits the animal to become his substitute. Then, parts of the offering are given to the Kohanim, so that those who dedicate their lives to study and teach the Torah are sustained through him and so that they will pray for him.

R' Bachya comments that every sinner, whether in thought or in deed, has been conquered by a spirit of contamination. When he seeks atonement, he must bring an offering that will be burned upon the Altar, at least in part, to symbolize that the fire of the Altar will consume the fire of his evil passions.

He adds that the various parts of the process of slaughter are symbolic of the *אַרְבַּע מִיתוֹת בֵּית דִּין*, four forms of capital punishment — a further allusion to an offering's nature as a substitute for the owner. A reference to this idea is found in the Midrash, which states that when Abraham was offering the ram that replaced Isaac on the altar, he said:

„רבנו של עולם, הרניי שוחט את האיל, כך תהיה רואה כאלו בני שחוט לפניך.“ נטל דמו, אמר „כך תהא רואה כאלו דם יצחק זרוק לפניך.“ ... שרפו, אמר לו „כך תהא רואה כאלו אפרו צבור לפניך על גבי המזבח.“

“Master of the universe, I am about to slaughter this ram; may You consider it as if

my son had been slaughtered before You." He took the blood and said to Him: "May You consider it as if Isaac's blood had been thrown before You," ... He burned it and said to Him: "May it be considered before You as if Isaac's ashes were piled before You on the Altar" (*Tanchuma, Sh'lach* 14).

It is an act of supreme graciousness that God is prepared to accept an offering from us instead of punishing us directly for our misdeeds.

It is an act of supreme graciousness that God is prepared to accept an offering from us instead of punishing us directly for our misdeeds. This is why the offerings are described throughout *Leviticus* as a satisfying aroma to God, because God is pleased when His children repent and seek to change their lives for the better.

Thereby he raises his mundane desires and makes them worthy of being placed on the heavenly Altar.

Recanati comments that one who brings an offering with such noble thoughts has truly made himself an offering, as noted above in the deeper meaning of the verse, *When a man among you brings an offering to HASHEM* (1:2). As the Sages say of one who brings a humble meal-offering, it is as if he had offered his own life upon the Altar (*Menachos* 104b; see comm. to 2:1). Thereby he raises his mundane desires and makes them worthy of being placed on the heavenly Altar.

Union with God Ramban and R' Bachya:

If other Names were used, some might err, thinking that there are many gods or forces, one demanding this offering and another demanding some other offering.

Shimon ben Azzai teaches that wherever the Torah commands that offerings be brought, these commandments use only God's Four-letter Name — יְהוָה — never such Names as אֱלֹהִים or אֱל, so that non-believers will not have fuel for disputation (*Menachos* 110a). The commentators give various insights into Ben Azzai's statement. If other Names were used, some might err, thinking that there are many gods or forces, one demanding this offering and another demanding some other offering. Since the Name *Elokim* represents God as the One Who controls nature, that Name might be taken to imply that there is an angel or a power who has dominion over a particular land or aspect of existence, and that that power requires the

offering. The Four-letter Name is formed of the letters that spell *יהוה*, *was, is and will be*, meaning that God is eternal. This is not God as He appears in a particular guise — Judge, Provider, Life-giver, and so on — but God as He is. Furthermore, this is His Name as the God of Mercy. Let no one think, therefore, that God requires offerings to feed or appease Him. The Eternal One has no needs that man can satisfy — no needs at all, for everything is His and nothing is beyond His power!

What then is the purpose of the offerings? These commentators offer Kabbalistic explanations that are beyond the scope of this work, but the essence of them is that the offerings provide man an opportunity to unite himself with God to whatever extent it is possible for mortal man to do so.

The offerings offer man an opportunity to unite himself with God to whatever extent it is possible for mortal man to do so.

In a similar vein, there is a humanly created fire below on the Altar and there is the Heavenly fire from above, which God has placed upon Israel's Altar. Both of these Altar flames are fed by the offerings of the Jewish people, symbolizing the union of man's spiritual aspirations with God's goals for him. Thus the offerings provide Israel a means for spiritual elevation.

Acknowledging Nothingness

Man could not function or even exist without God. In this sense, his existence is not even equivalent to that of a puppet.

Maharal: All creatures emanate from God and, in comparison with Him, have no independent existence of their own. True, man has freedom of choice and his intellect puts great achievements within his reach. But all of this is possible only because God gives him the power to do so. Man could not function or even exist without God. In this sense, his existence is not even equivalent to that of a puppet controlled by its puppeteer; take away the puppeteer and the puppet does not disintegrate. Man may perhaps be more comparable to a gas fire that dies when the gas flow is ended. The goal of Creation is for man to acknowledge this basic fact; to recognize and proclaim that everything exists because of God and nothing can survive without Him. There are many

ways for God's glory to be revealed and recognized. He manifests Himself as merciful, judgmental, life-giving, and so on. But the highest recognition of all is for man to know *אֶחָדוּת ה'*, *The Oneness of God*, meaning that there is nothing aside from Him. He achieves his ultimate greatness when he recognizes that *אֵין עִוָּר מִלְּבָדוֹ*, *there is none beside Him* (Deuteronomy 4:35).

An offering is a demonstration of this concept. It says that its owner is surrendering his possessions to their Source. Theoretically, one might have expected him to be ready to give even his very life in acknowledgment of God's sovereignty, but that is not His will. God wants man to live, to grow, to thrive, to serve — and God ordains the offerings as man's way to recognize His Oneness. Thus, by offering his possessions, one symbolizes that he has no existence but for God's will.

Uniting **Kuzari and Akeidah:** **Body** **and Soul**

Clearly, material food cannot provide nourishment to the soul, which is not a physical entity.

Kuzari writes that the efficacy of offerings in obtaining God's favor is comparable to the way food makes it possible for the soul to maintain its attachment to the body. Clearly, material food cannot provide nourishment to the soul, which is not a physical entity. Nevertheless, somehow the nourishment of the body enables it to remain healthy enough to play host to the soul. Similarly, the "food of the Altar's fire" somehow effects the process that enables the *Shechinah* to remain among Israel.

The food of the soul is not measured in calories, vitamins, and minerals.

Akeidas Yitzchak explains how this strange process functions. The food of the soul is not measured in calories, vitamins, and minerals. Only intellectual and spiritual pursuits can nourish the soul. Torah study, prayer, even meals in celebration of such events as circumcisions, the Sabbath, and the completion of tractates, all have a sacred content that is capable of nourishing the soul. Only in this sense do the offerings constitute food for God. Man's dedication to Him and His commandments provides the nourishment that

enables the *Shechinah* to attach itself to human beings and their handiwork.

*When man eats,
it is the food's
spiritual content
that nourishes him.*

Citing *Arizal*, *Sh'lah HaKadosh* offers a profound insight into the above comments. Nothing can remain in existence unless it has within it a spark of holiness; a total absence of holiness would result in something's disappearance. As the Sages teach, even a blade of grass survives and grows only because there is a heavenly force that commands, "Grow! Grow!" What the Sages mean is that everything has spiritual content, without which it could not survive. Similarly, when man eats, it is the food's spiritual content that nourishes him.

*Man does not live
merely because of
the "bread" —
the material
component — in
the slice of bread.*

The Torah states that God gave manna to Israel in the Wilderness in order to teach for all time that *לֹא עַל-הַלֶּחֶם לִכְדוֹ יַחְיֶה הָאָדָם כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצָא פִּי-יְיָ יַחְיֶה*, *not by bread alone does man live, rather by everything that emanates from the mouth of God does man live* (Deuteronomy 8:3). In its simple meaning, the verse says that bread is not the main thing in life. *Arizal* explains that the verse is saying much more. Bread is composed of two parts: its physical component and its spark of holiness. We think of food in terms of nutritive value, but that is not what sustains life. Man does not live merely because of the "bread" — the material component — in the slice of bread. He lives through the bread's spiritual component — *what emanates from the mouth of God*. This is what holds together body and soul and what holds together Godliness and Israel through the agency of the offerings.

IV. Rambam and Opposing Views

Controversial Thesis A **Rambam** (*Moreh Nevuchim* 3:32, 46) has a much-quoted and very controversial view of the reason for offerings. With few exceptions, the early commentators are critical of his opinion; even *Ritva* who defends it does not agree with it.

According to *Rambam*, God ordained the sacrificial service in order to eradicate the deep-seated belief in idolatry and the alleged power of certain forms of animal life. It was the custom of ancient nations to erect temples for their idols and to offer animals as sacrifices to the celestial powers. They thought that their fate was controlled by heavenly forces, and that the offerings would strengthen the astrological constellations, thereby bringing success and plenty upon their worshipers. Thus we find that the Egyptians worshiped images of sheep, believing that this would give power to the heavenly constellation of Aries the Ram. This, they thought, would induce material success for its adherents, since sheep are easy to raise and, through their wool, milk, and offspring, provide profits for their owners. To show honor to their deity, the Egyptians refrained from eating the meat of sheep. Similarly, other idolaters worship cattle, reasoning that cattle are the very symbol of prosperity and sustenance, since their strong backs enable man to plow and work the earth. In deference to the constellation associated with cattle and the benefits they thought it capable of conferring upon them, those peoples would not slaughter or eat the meat of cattle. Even today, Hindus consider cows to be sacred.

The Torah commanded that offerings be brought in order that it become publicly known that these animals are not to be worshiped.

Therefore, the Torah commanded that offerings be brought from these species to the One God, in order that it become publicly known that these animals are not to be worshiped, but, to the contrary, their slaughter is the source of atonement for sins. This is

based on the principle that the only way one can rid oneself of a spiritual malady is by going to the other extreme; thus, belief in the power of these creatures would be undermined and destroyed by their slaughter and their use in the service of the only God Who has genuine power. And to further establish that they have no powers of their own, the sacrificial service reiterates constantly that an offering is solely to provide satisfaction to God. This summarizes the view of *Rambam*.

It is degrading to God's Altar to say that it exists only to counter the ideas of idolatrous fools.

Most other commentators follow the lead of *Ramban* in disputing *Rambam's* opinion on many grounds. *Ramban* argues that it is degrading to God's Altar to say that it exists only to counter the ideas of idolatrous fools, and to say that what the Torah describes as the food of God's fire and a satisfying aroma to God is but a device to negate preposterous notions. Furthermore, the sacrificial service could have the opposite effect of even reinforcing the false ideas of idolaters, because the service makes plain that even God requires these animals for His needs! Far from contradicting the notions of Egypt and Canaan, this would only encourage their beliefs.

Surely, Balaam did not intend to refute idolaters by slaughtering their gods.

How can the sacrificial service be deemed a response to idolatry when Adam and Abel brought offerings before idolatry ever existed? Noah brought offerings as soon as he and his family emerged from the Ark, at a time when there were no idolaters left alive. The evil Balaam brought offerings on seven altars in order to "appease" God and ease the way for him to curse Israel. Surely, Balaam did not intend to refute idolaters by slaughtering their gods. Heaven forbid that the offerings have no positive, heavenly purpose, as *Rambam* seems to maintain!

Ritva's These objections to *Rambam's* thesis seem to be insuperable, although *Abarbanel* offers proofs from Scripture and the Sages in his defense. *Ritva* agrees with *Ramban* regarding the reasons and symbolism of

offerings, but he argues that in his justifiable zeal to defend the sanctity of the Torah and the honor of God, *Ramban* may have misinterpreted *Rambam's* words. *Ritva* deflects the sting of *Ramban's* argument, and gives his understanding of what *Rambam* had in mind, as follows:

Rambam did not say that the offerings were meant to disabuse idol worshipers of their foolishness.

Rambam followed the well-trodden course of the Sages in seeking to provide rational explanations for the commandments, so that ordinary people would be able to respond to critics of the Torah, but in the course of doing so, he often concealed the deeper, more esoteric reasons. Indeed, the Sages praise those who do not reveal what is beyond the intellectual capacity of the unqualified (*Pesachim* 119a). *Rambam* did not say, as *Ramban* apparently understood him to, that the offerings were meant to disabuse idol worshipers of their foolishness. Instead, he said that the reason for animal offerings was to prevent Jews from having a misconception. In *Rambam's* words:

והיה המנהג המפורסם בעולם כלו שהיו או רגילין
כו והעבודה הכוללת אשר גרלו עליה היתה
להקריב מיני בעלי חיים בהיכלות ההם אשר היו
מעמידים בהם הצלמים ולקטר לפניהם ... לא
גורה חכמתו ... שיצונו להניח מיני העבודות ההם
כלם או מקצתם ולבטלם כי או היה מה שלא יעלה
כלב לקבלו בפי טבע האדם שהוא נוטה תמיד
למורגל והי' דומה כאלו יבא נביא בזמנו זה
שיקרא לעבודת ה' ויאמר „ה' צוה אתכם שלא
תתפללו ולא תצומן ולא תבקשו תשועתו בעת
צרה, ותהיה עבודתכם מחשבה בלי מעשה.”

The widespread practice in the entire world, to which [the Jewish people] were accustomed, and the general service in which they had been raised, was to slaughter living creatures in those temples, in which they would erect statues and cause [offerings] to go up in smoke before them ... His wisdom ... did not decree that He should command that all or some of such forms of service

*That would have
been unacceptable
to human nature,
which tends to the
familiar.*

should be set aside and discontinued, for that would have been unacceptable to human nature, which tends to the familiar. It would have been similar to a prophet in our time coming to summon people to serve God, and saying, "God has commanded that in time of distress, you do not pray, not fast, and not beg for His salvation, and your service should be all cerebral, without deed."

The above quote states clearly that, in *Rambam's* view, the offerings were needed to prevent Jews from backsliding. We find that Moses warned the people that they would have a downfall after his death, and, indeed, it happened many times that they fell prey to idol worship. *Rambam's* mention of the custom of other nations to venerate cattle and sheep is only to explain why only these particular species were chosen for use as offerings, and not others.

*They, in their lofty
spirituality, were
able to know
what God would
command in
- future times.*

That the righteous men of ancient times brought offerings even when there were no idolaters was because they, in their lofty spirituality, were able to know what God would command in future times. They anticipated God's commandments, just as the Patriarchs did, when they fulfilled the Torah's tenets before they were given. Balaam brought offerings not to disabuse heathens of their evil notions, but because the sacrificial service had already become the norm of Israel, and Balaam thought he could gain Divine favor thereby.

*An Urge
Not
Understood*

Michtav Me'Eliyahu (vol. 4, p. 194) remarks that *Rambam's* reasoning, like all such theses by people of awesome greatness, can be understood on various levels. At its deeper level, *Rambam* is far from incomprehensible. For example, *Rambam* (*Moreh Nevuchim* 3:46) writes that the goats required for sin-offerings come to atone for the sin of Joseph's brothers, who slaughtered a goat to conceal their sin of selling him into slavery. Must people still atone

*The roots of those
sins still remain
embedded in the
Jewish psyche.*

for a sin committed by other people centuries before? The sense of all such pronouncements by the Sages and the commentators is that the roots of those sins still remain embedded in the Jewish psyche and, consequently, we must strive to neutralize, if not eradicate, them.

*So logical did the
idea seem that
even Enosh erred.*

But it goes even deeper. *Rambam (Hil. Avodah Zarah* ch. 1) explains how the institution of idolatry began in the generation of Enosh, Adam's righteous grandson. So logical did the idea seem that even Enosh erred. Its adherents argued that since God appointed the heavenly bodies and other natural forces to execute His will in the universe, it was only proper to pay homage to them, just as common courtesy demands that respect be shown to the ministers and officials of kings and presidents. So people began bowing to the sun, to honor the Creator Whom the sun served loyally. Then the intention motivating the service gradually became perverted, as men and women, their sensitivities growing dull, came to believe that the sun had independent power, and finally that the sun was master — much as people in our time often mistake the bureaucrat for the government and the legislator for the law.

*Then the intention
motivating the
service gradually
became perverted.*

The writings of the Sages, as well as the narratives of the Scriptures, are replete with proof that the malady of idol worship was in proportion to the greatness of the people it struck. The philosophical basis for this heresy was more likely to strike intelligent, thinking people than fools.

*Why, then, does
the very idea of
idol worship seem
more the stuff of
prancing witch
doctors than
pipe-smoking
philosophers?*

Why, then, does the very idea of idol worship seem ludicrous to us? Why does it seem more the stuff of prancing witch doctors than pipe-smoking philosophers?

The Talmud teaches that the Men of the Great Assembly prayed that God purge Israel of the evil inclination to worship idols, lest the Second Temple suffer the same catastrophe that befell the First. God accepted their prayer, and:

נפק כגוריא דנורא מבית קודש הקדשים. אמר ליה
 נביא לישראל, „היינו יצרא דעבודה זרה.”
*Something like a lion of flame left the Holy
 of Holies. A prophet informed Israel, “That
 was the inclination to worship idols.” (Yoma
 69b, Sanhedrin 66a)*

*It was an
 inclination that
 endangered good
 people, people
 whose aspirations
 were in the Holy of
 Holies.*

It is instructive that the flaming lion of idolatry exited not from a neighborhood notorious for apostasy, but from the Holy of Holies. It was an inclination that endangered good people, people who sincerely and avidly sought to serve God, people whose aspirations were in the Holy of Holies. That is why it was so dangerous that the Men of the Great Assembly beseeched God to remove it before it brought another disaster.

When that corrosive urge departed from Israel, it took a prophet to inform the nation what had happened. Prophets perceive the highest level of revelation, that is why they are uniquely subject to the inclination to see elevation in idols. The level of prophecy is where the desire for revelation and the possibility of finding it in contaminated places strikes hardest.

*It was Divine
 intervention, not
 the good sense of
 humanity, that
 removed it.*

Clearly, therefore, it is not for us to judge the generations that felt the tug of that “flaming lion” of desire for idols. It was Divine intervention, not the good sense of humanity, that removed it. We can no more understand the passion for idols than we can the terror of parents that their children would contract polio or smallpox in the years before those diseases were virtually wiped out.

This is why *Rambam* associates the Temple offerings with a Divine plan to turn Israel from idolatry. We fail to appreciate that need only because we feel no urge to worship idols — but that is not a mark of our greatness. It is a mark of national weakness that the Men of the Great Assembly, the august body that reshaped the nation after the first Destruction, found it necessary to make their prayerful request of God.

*When the Messiah
comes we will be
strong enough to
overcome its lure.*

When the Messiah comes and raises Israel to its former station, we will once again be subject to the error that began in the generation of Enosh, but then we will be strong enough to overcome its lure.

V. Let Our Lips Compensate . . .

רבון העולמים, אתה צויתנו להקריב קרבן התמיד
... ועתה בעונותינו חרב בית המקדש ... ואתה
אמרת ונשלמה פרים שפתינו, לכן יהי רצון ...
שיהא שים שפתותינו חשוב ... באלו הקרבנו
התמיד ...

*Master of the worlds, You commanded us to
bring the continual offering ... But now,
through our sins, the Holy Temple is de-
stroyed ... But You said: Let our lips
compensate for the bulls — therefore may it
be Your will ... that the prayer of our lips be
worthy ... as if we had brought the
continual offering (Daily Shacharis Prayer).*

Hope after Sin King David says: וזכתי אלהים רוח נשברה — *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit (Psalms 51:19).*

*By sinning, a
person destroys
his personal,
inner Temple.*

This verse teaches that a person who repents is regarded as if he had ascended to Jerusalem, built the Temple, erected the Altar, and offered all the offerings upon it (*Vayikra Rabbah* 7:2). By sinning, a person destroys his personal, inner Temple, because he cuts his bond with the Godliness that should influence his every action. By repenting, he renews the bond and rebuilds the Temple within.

*God asked
Wisdom, Prophecy,
and Torah how
sinners should
be punished.
Their answers
were all harsh.*

The Sages teach that God asked Wisdom, Prophecy, and Torah how sinners should be punished. Their answers were all harsh. Wisdom said that sinners should be pursued by their own evil. Prophecy said that a sinner is worthy of death. Torah said that every

sinner should bring an **זָשָׁח**, *guilt-offering*. After hearing all their answers, God said otherwise: "Let him repent and gain atonement" (Yalkut Tehillim 702, Yerushalmi Makkos 2:6).

The responses seem strange. What sort of Wisdom is it that is ignorant of the vast potential of repentance? The prophecies of Scripture are saturated with calls for repentance — how could Prophecy disdain the possibility of repentance and insist that death is the only answer? Does Torah know of no course other than a guilt-offering?

In our discussion of the purpose of the offerings, we have seen that the commentators view them as representations of what the owner should feel; that he should acknowledge his own guilt and his personal liability to the fate that God, in His mercy, permits him to impose on the animal instead. It is in this sense that Wisdom, Prophecy, and Torah responded to God's query. To be pursued by evil, for example, has two connotations. One may be punished endlessly for what he has done, or one may feel such painful remorse that he negates himself totally to the will of God. Similarly, the death that Prophecy decreed on the sinner need not be literal. An illustration is the sinful city of Nineveh, to whom God dispatched Jonah with the fearful message that **וַיִּנָּח נִינְוֶה**, *Nineveh shall be overturned* (Jonah 3:5). The result was — apparently, at least — that the prophecy was never fulfilled, because the people repented, and God relented. But that is not true. The city *was* overturned! It transformed its way of life through repentance; nevertheless, it was as *overturned* as if it had been destroyed, because the old Nineveh no longer existed.

It was as overturned as if it had been destroyed, because the old Nineveh no longer existed.

It is instructive that the offering demanded by Torah was a *guilt-offering*. Ramban (Leviticus 5:15) comments that the name of the guilt-offering, **זָשָׁח**, is derived from the word **שָׁחָה**, *devastation*, because the sinner should feel as if he deserves to be devastated. Thus, Torah's prescription of a guilt-offering is of a

tion at his bygone day's achievements. Those are the times when man should ascribe both his potential and his accomplishment to God. In the Temple, Israel did so through the morning and afternoon continual offerings; in times of exile, we do so through the morning and afternoon prayers.

*But at night,
man is clearly
passive and
dependent on God
to renew his
strength for
another day.*

But at night, man is clearly passive and dependent on God to renew his strength for another day of activity. Only one sacrificial service remains for the night. In the event limbs or other sacrificial parts had not been burned during the day, they could be placed on the Altar all night. This symbolizes that even when it is clear beyond question that God is King, man must make an additional effort to consecrate everything to Him, even the relatively minor leftovers of the day's accomplishments. Thus, *Shacharis* corresponds to the offering that dedicates to God the incoming day's potential; *Minchah* corresponds to the offering that acknowledges Him as Master of everything done; *Maariv* proclaims that even when man is inactive, we declare His absolute oneness and uncontested sovereignty.

Outgrowths of Day

*Israel in exile is
likened to Jacob
who spent so much
of his life
as a wanderer
and an exile.*

נִאמַר אֱלֹהִים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמַרְאֵה הַלַּיְלָה
And God spoke to Israel in visions of the
night (Genesis 46:2).

Israel in exile is likened to Jacob who spent so much of his life as a wanderer and an exile. But Jacob is the Patriarch of Torah, too [see Overviews to *Vayeitzei* and *Vayishlach*], and allegiance to Torah has been and remains our guarantor against the savage blows of so many centuries without the Temple.

We do not find God speaking to Abraham or Isaac in a vision of the night, only to Jacob (*Genesis* 48:2). At that moment, Jacob was poised to leave the Promised Land to begin a long, long Egyptian exile. He was afraid, and well he might be, because by the time the exile ended, his children would have fallen to the forty-ninth level of impurity, until they were barely

piece with those of Wisdom and Prophecy. It calls upon the sinner to recognize the enormity of his deed and to realize that only through his readiness to change himself can he once more rebuild the Temple of holiness that resides within every Jew (*Michtav Me'Eliyahu*).

Prayer takes the place of offerings, because it enables us to capture the exaltation that had formerly existed only in the Temple.

The dialogue between God and those of whom he inquired came *before* there was a Temple and it applies today when, lamentably, there is no Temple. The attitudes that can atone for sin do not depend on offerings; they are inner feelings, and they are both inspired by prayer and expressed by prayer. In this sense, prayer takes the place of offerings, because it enables us to capture the exaltation that had formerly existed only in the Temple.

The Daily Sacrifices

It is a reciprocal process: God gives life and man devotes his life to God.

According to R' Yehoshua ben Levi (*Berachos* 28b) the *tefillos* correspond to the daily sacrifices. Each morning and each evening, a sheep was offered as a communal burnt-offering. Every member of the nation shared in the offering by virtue of the annual half-shekel head tax, from whose proceeds all communal offerings were brought. These daily offerings were brought every day, even on the Sabbath, festivals, and Yom Kippur, to symbolize Israel's awareness that the entire universe is always on God's Altar, as it were, and that without God's continuous attention and mercy there could be no universe. It is a reciprocal process: God gives life and man devotes his life to God.

These two offerings represent Israel's ceding of all its productive capacities to God. Daytime is the period most symbolic of This World, man's time of vigor and activity; consequently, it is vital for him to acknowledge its true Sovereign, both at the beginning and end of his day.

The first appearance of the sun is the birth of a new day, a new period of accomplishment. The productive hours of the day end when the sun goes down, that is the time when man takes inventory and feels satisfac-

distinguishable from the Egyptians.

The night when hope was enveloped in darkness was about to begin, so God came to Jacob *in visions of the night* to show him that even though Jews might be exiled from their land, they could never be exiled from their God. *וְגָלוּ לְכַבֵּל שְׂכִינָה עִמָּהֶם*, *When they were exiled to Babylon, the Divine Presence was with them* (Megillah 29a). Therefore Jacob, the Patriarch of exile, originated *Maariv*, to show his children that exile-evening may be epilogue to one day, but is prologue to another, even better one (*Meshech Chochmah*).

Jacob originated Maariv, to show his children that exile-evening may be epilogue to one day, but is prologue to another, even better one.

The Evening Service represents the burning of the offerings in the Temple, a service that could be concluded at night only if the rest of the service had been done during the previous day. This is the eternal lesson that, by continuing our loyalty to Torah which began in the golden, daylight eras of our history, we maintain our bond with God no matter how dark the night and through our prayers we retain our bond to the Temple and the One whose holiness once rested upon it — and still rests upon His people.

Rabbi Nosson Scherman
Rosh Chodesh Adar II, 5749

סדר ויקרא

Sidrah Vayikra

א וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֵלָיו מֵאֹהֶל
ב מוֹעֵד לֵאמֹר: דְּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ

וּקְרָא

א/א-ב

I

1. וַיִּקְרָא אֶל מֹשֶׁה — He called to Moses. This calling introduces a Book that is devoted almost exclusively to God's teachings to Moses and virtually devoid of narrative. The latter chapters of *Exodus* relate how the Tabernacle had been built and assumed the holiness needed to make it a fitting resting place for the *Shechinah*, God's Presence, and for the sacrificial service. Consequently, God now summoned Moses to teach him the laws of the service. In addition, the newly built Tent of Meeting now became the place from which God would speak to Moses.

The Sages expound that the mention of this summons to Moses is meant to teach that whenever God wished to impart a new command to Moses, He first summoned him lovingly, saying, "Moses, Moses." In reply, Moses would say, "וְהִנְנִי, I am

at Your service" (Rashi, *Sifra*).

Alternatively, God did not call Moses every time He spoke to him, but at this particular time it was necessary to do so. At the end of *Exodus* (40:34-38), we read that the glory of God covered the Tabernacle with such intensity that even Moses was afraid to enter. Consequently, God "called" Moses [to reassure him that the Tabernacle had been built to benefit him and his people, not to exclude them] (Ramban et al.). Thereafter, Moses was free to enter the Tabernacle whenever he felt the need to speak to God (see *Numbers* 7:89).

As the verse implies, the call came exclusively to Moses. God's voice is powerful enough to shatter trees and be heard throughout the world, but it was the Divine will that it be heard only by Moses.⁽¹⁾

1. The small aleph in the word וַיִּקְרָא

Sifra derives that whenever God summoned Moses, he called him by name: "Moses, Moses," an indication of love. The prophecy to Balaam, however, is introduced by the word וַיִּקְרָא, without an *aleph* (*Numbers* 23:16). That word has two connotations: *chance* (מִקְרָה) and *contamination* (as in the *tumah* of קָרִי). This implies that, while God had a reason to speak to Balaam, He did not do so lovingly. The commentators find homiletical insights in the fact that the summons to Moses is spelled with a miniature *aleph*, like the summons to Balaam.

In his monumental humility, Moses wished to describe God's revelation to him with the same uncomplimentary word used for Balaam — without an *aleph* — but God instructed him to include the *aleph*, as an expression of affection. Too humble to do so wholeheartedly, Moses wrote a small *aleph* (*Baal Haturim*).

The word *aleph* means to *teach*, thus the small letter implies that one should learn always to be humble. No man was better qualified to teach this lesson than Moses, who was not only the greatest of all prophets, but the humblest person who ever lived (*R' Bunam of P'schis'cha*).

When Moses speaks of himself, he uses a small *aleph*, but he uses full-sized letters in his final words to the Jewish people: אֲשֶׁרִיךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, *Fortunate are you, O Israel* (*Deuteronomy* 33:29). The quintessential Jewish leader is modest with reference to himself, but lavish in his praise of his people (*R' Shimshon of Ostropoli*).

The expression used for Balaam implies that God came to *him* — God did not call him to Himself, but came to meet Balaam. God had to communicate with the evil prophet, but did not wish to call him to the Divine Presence. Moses, however, was a welcome guest, and God

1 He called to Moses, and HASHEM spoke to him from 1-2 the Tent of Meeting, saying: ² Speak to the Children

אָלֵי — *To him.* We have been told previously that God was speaking to Moses; why was it necessary to add "to him?" In thirteen places, the Torah states that God spoke to "Moses and Aaron," but there are thirteen other places where the Torah implies that God spoke only to Moses. These thirteen exclusions indicate that even when both brothers are mentioned, God's direct communication was to Moses alone. [But by mentioning the two brothers as co-recipients of God's word, the Torah indicates Moses was bidden to share his prophecy with Aaron. Thus God paid tribute to Aaron by showing that he had priority over all other Jews, in being the first one to know the *mitzvos*] (*Rashi; Sifra*).

מִאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד — *From the Tent of Meeting.* From which point in the Tent did God's voice come to Moses? Two verses give contradictory answers to this question: Our verse states that the revelation came from the Tent, which always refers to the outer chamber of the Tabernacle. However, *Exodus 25:22* states that God spoke to him from atop the Holy Ark, between the two Cherubim, which is the inner chamber, the Holy of Holies. Following the rule that when two verses contradict one

another, a third verse resolves the difficulty, we find *Numbers 7:89*, which teaches that Moses would enter the Tent and stand there while God's voice, as it were, emanated from between the Cherubim (*Rashi, Numbers 7:89*).

לֵאמֹר — *Saying.* When God spoke to Moses using the term לֵאמֹר, it usually means that he was instructed to convey God's teaching to the nation (*Rashi, Ibn Ezra, et al.*). In our verse, however, this interpretation is not tenable, because the very next verse specifically instructs Moses to teach these commands (*Malbim*). If so, what was Moses told to "say" to the people? God wanted him to convey the inspiring but sobering message that his awesome degree of prophecy was granted only for the benefit of the people, and only as long as they remained worthy of it. This being the case, there was a special responsibility upon Israel to maintain its high spiritual level (*Rashi*).⁽¹⁾

Implications of the Word לֵאמֹר

As noted above, the generally accepted sense of this very common word is that the recipient of the message is to convey the statement or teaching to others. However, *Ramban (Exodus 6:10)* questions this in-

delighted, as it were, in summoning him, as a king enjoys inviting his beloved and loyal friend to the palace (*Avnei Nezer*).

1. This was the moment when God wanted to impress upon Israel that they, not Moses, had the responsibility to be worthy of receiving prophecy. It was the first revelation in the new Tabernacle, the structure that had been built with their contributions, in order to allow God's Presence to rest among them. Now it was important for them to be made aware of their responsibility to maintain a high level of holiness. This interpretation is indicated by the verse's emphasis that this prophecy was given in the Tent of Meeting (*Be'er Yitzchok*).

interpretation, because of verses like ours. Clearly, therefore, the word must have some other connotation, as well.

Ramban maintains that **לֵאמֹר** connotes clarity; the word of God came to Moses with absolute clarity, not with allusions or symbolism. To this, *HaK'sav V'HaKabbalah* adds that the Written Torah presents only the outlines of a commandment. The voluminous details, interpretations, and laws are also of Sinaitic origin; they too were taught to Moses and were taught by him, in turn, to Israel. This second aspect of the commandment is expressed by the word **לֵאמֹר**, which implies that God taught Moses all possible aspects of the commandment.

2. General Rules of Offerings

This verse is a general introduction to the subject of animal offerings, and the Sages derive from it many laws regarding the sort of animals that are ineligible for the Altar (see *Rashi* and *Sifra*).

דָּבָר . . . וְאָמַרְתָּ — *Speak . . . and say*. The commentators note the apparent redundancy. *R' Hirsch* explains that, in this context, "speak" denotes brief, concise expression, meaning the Written Torah, which is the revealed Word of God. But the Written Torah

cannot be properly understood without the illumination of the Oral Torah, the discursive "saying", by means of which God explained the Torah to Moses, and through him to the Jewish people.

Or HaChaim comments that these two expressions refer specifically to the contents of the following chapters. "Speak" [דָּבָר] implies an unalterable statement, a Divine decree, such as the laws of the offerings for the various sins, which are required whether or not the sinner chooses to bring them. "Say" [אָמַר] implies a mutual, voluntary form of discourse. In the context of Leviticus, it alludes to the free-will offerings — such as elevation-, meal-, and peace-offerings — that people bring when they seek to improve themselves and achieve greater closeness to God.

אָדָם — *A man*. Commonly, Scripture refers to the person bringing an offering as **אִישׁ**, *man*; why does our verse use the unusual **אָדָם**, which is also the name of Adam, the first human being? Just as Adam did not bring stolen animals as offerings, since the whole world was his, so too you may not serve God with anything acquired dishonestly (*Rashi*).^{1]}

קָרְבָּן — *An offering*. As noted in the

1. Many commentators note that the verse begins by speaking of an offering to **HASHEM**, and concludes with *your offering*, omitting mention of **HASHEM**. Homiletically, the verse teaches: If you offer *yourself* to God — i.e., your essential humanity — in a sincere effort to draw closer to God, then your offering has the exalted status of **קָרְבָּן לַיהוָה**, an offering to **HASHEM**. But if your desire is only to go through the motions of performing the service with the animal of your choice, then, unfortunately, it is merely *your offering* (*Sh'lah, Tanya*).

- 1 of Israel and say to them: When a man among you
 2 brings an offering to HASHEM: from animals — from
 the cattle or from the flock shall you bring your offering.

Overview, the root of קָרַבֵּן is קָרַב, to bring near. An offering is the means given us by God to bring ourselves closer to Him and to elevate ourselves (R' Hirsch).

לִיהוָה — To HASHEM. Throughout the Torah, only this Four-Letter Name of God — the Name representing mercy — is used in connection with offerings, never the Name Elokim, which represents judgment (Sifra). Ancient idolaters believed that animal offerings were needed to assuage the anger of a judgmental, blood-thirsty god. This is totally foreign to Jewish belief. The Torah teaches us that offerings are a means to draw closer to HASHEM — the Merciful God (R' Hirsch; see Overview).

מִן הַבְּהֵמָה — From animals. The word *b'heimah* can refer to all land animals, kosher and non-kosher. Therefore, the verse goes on to specify that the only acceptable animals are from the herd or the flock, meaning cattle, sheep or goats, the kosher domestic animals (Sifra).

הַצֹּאן ... הַבָּקָר — Cattle ... the flock. Cattle refers to large domestic livestock; it is sometimes translated the herd. The Hebrew word צֹאן, flock, includes both sheep and goats, the small domestic livestock.

תָּקִיבוּ — Shall you bring. The plural form of the Hebrew implies that partners may join in an elevation-offering, unlike meal-offerings that

may be offered only by individuals (Rashi; Sifra).

3-9. עֹלָה / Elevation-Offerings from Cattle

The very first offering described in the Book of Offerings is brought voluntarily, and it may be brought to the Temple even by non-Jews (Chullin 13b). In the words of Isaiah (56:7), for My House will be called a House of prayer for all nations.

There are various versions of the translation of *olah*, a word whose root, עָלָה, connotes going up. According to Rashi and Radak, *olah* means an offering that is completely burned [apparently because it goes up in flames to God].

Ramban, Ibn Ezra, and R' Bachya hold that the name refers to the sin for which one generally brings the offering. It atones for sinful ideas or thoughts, which come up in a person's mind or imagination.

R' Hirsch comments that the name derives from its purpose, which is to raise its owner from the status of sinner and bring him to a state of spiritual elevation.

Our translation of *elevation-offering* is literal and allows for all of the above connotations.

Tanchuma (Tzav 1) states: Why is its name *olah*? Because it is superior [עֲלִיּוֹנָה] to all other offerings.

An *olah* is brought by someone who has intentionally committed a sin for which the Torah does not

ג אֶת־קִרְבָּנְכֶם: אִם־עֹלָה קָרַבְנוּ מִן־הַבֶּקָר
וְכָר תָּמִים יִקְרִיבוּ אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
ד יִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לְרֹצְנוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְסִמְךָ יָדוֹ עַל
ה רֹאשׁ הָעֹלָה וְנִרְצָה לוֹ לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו: וְשַׁחֲטָה
אֶת־בֶּן הַבֶּקָר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהִקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אֲדָרָן
הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַדָּם וְזָרְקוּ אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־

prescribe a corporal punishment, for sinful thoughts that have not been carried out in deed, and by those who ascend to Jerusalem for the Pilgrimage Festivals. Similarly, it may be brought by anyone who wishes to raise his spiritual level.

Ramban points out that *olah* is different from other offerings that bring atonement [with the exception of אָשָׁם, *guilt-offering* (ch. 5)]. The others come only for sins that were committed unintentionally, through carelessness; however the categories of sins for which *olah* is brought require an offering only if they are done intentionally. If done unintentionally, repentance is sufficient.

3. תָּמִים — *Unblemished*. The blemishes that disqualify an animal for use as an offering are given below (22:17-25). Complete must the animal be, by means of which one brings himself, his acts, and his efforts into the proximity of God. The prophet Malachi (1:8 ff) lashes out at those who use their sickly and lame animals in God's service. "Offer them to your pasha," the prophet cries out derisively, "and see if he will be pleased with you and receive you!" The Actuary of God's Torah demands the full complete life, with nothing omitted, nothing missing. In

exchange it promises a life in which even pain and death lose their sting. Such a life must be symbolized by unblemished animals that represent life at its fullest (R' Hirsch).

וְקָרְבָנוֹ — *He is to offer ...* This term can have either of two meanings: the animal should be declared consecrated for the purpose of an offering, or it may refer to the sacrificial service. The "offering" of this verse must refer to the obligation to sanctify the animal in its unblemished state (*Sifra*); the actual service is mentioned below (v. 5).

וְקָרִיב אֹתוֹ — *He is to bring it*. The responsibility of transporting the animal to the Tabernacle is the owner's (*Rashi*).

וְלִרְצֹנוֹ — *Voluntarily*. But no one can be coerced to bring an offering. What if someone is required to bring an offering but refuses to do so? The court may coerce him until he proclaims his willingness (*Rashi, Sifra*). Rambam (*Hil. Gerushin* 2:20) explains this seemingly incongruous course of action. The Jewish soul always wants to do the right thing, but external influences and temptations cloud our judgment. The court's coercion counters these external influences and allows the essential

1 ³ If one's offering is an elevation-offering from the cattle,
3-5 he is to offer an unblemished male; he is to bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, voluntarily, before HASHEM. ⁴ He shall lean his hand upon the head of the elevation-offering; and it shall become acceptable for him, to atone for him. ⁵ He shall slaughter the bull before HASHEM; the sons of Aaron, the Kohanim, shall bring the blood and throw the blood on the Altar, all around —

goodness of the soul to come through.
4. וְסָמָךְ — He shall lean. One who brings an animal offering must lean upon its head with both hands and with all his might. As he does so, he confesses the sin or shortcoming that prompted him to bring the offering. In the case of a peace-offering, where no sin is involved, he says words of praise to God (Rambam, *Ma'aseh HaKorbanos* (3:13-15).

וְיָדוּ — His hand. Although the word is in the singular, the leaning must be done with both hands (*Menachos* 93a). The singular form as used in Scripture denotes a person's strength; it is from this usage in our verse that the Sages (*ibid.*) derive that *semichah* must be performed with a person's entire strength (*Malbim* 16:21).

וְנִרְצָה — And it shall become acceptable for him. By means of the leaning [*semichah*], God will be influenced to feel favorable toward the supplicant so that the subsequent service will bring him atonement (*Malbim*; *Ha'amek Davar*). Without *semichah* there is still atonement, but the offering has not been brought in

its most effective manner (Rashi, *Yoma* 5a; see *Zevachim* 6a with Rashi).

לִפְנֵי ה' — Before HASHEM. In the Tabernacle Courtyard (Rashi), north of the Altar (v. 11).

וְהַקֹּהֲנִים אֶת הַדָּם — The Kohanim shall bring the blood. After the slaughter, the Kohanim are to receive the blood in a vessel so that it can be transported to the Altar. Since this is the first time the Kohanim have been mentioned in the chapter, this is the first service that absolutely must be performed by them (*מִקְדָּלָה*) [אֵילָךְ מִצְוַת כְּהֹנָה]. The slaughter may be performed by the owner or anyone else (Rashi, *Sifra*).^[1]

The word "Kohanim" teaches that it is not sufficient for them to be sons of Aaron; they must also be qualified to serve as Kohanim, meaning that if they are *תַּלְמִידִים*, the children of women whom Kohanim are forbidden to marry (see 21:7,14), they are disqualified from performing the sacrificial service (Rashi; *Sifra*).

וְנָדָו — And throw. The Kohen holding the basin of blood stands in

1. Slaughter, the act of depriving an animal of life and the owner of his property, is not a Divine service; it is only the preparatory step to the service of קָרְבַּן, the process of coming "closer" to God. It is significant that in speaking of such services as *semichah* and the essential blood service, the Torah calls the offering an *olah*, but in speaking of slaughter, it is called only a bull (R' Hirsch).

הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב אֲשֶׁר-פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד:
וְהִפְשִׁיט אֶת-הָעֹלָה וְנָתַח אֹתָהּ לְנִתְחֶיהָ:
וְנָתַנוּ בְּנֵי אֹהֶרֶן הַכֹּהֵן אֵשׁ עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וְעָרְכוּ עֵצִים עַל-הָאֵשׁ: וְעָרְכוּ בְּנֵי אֹהֶרֶן
הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת הַנִּתְחִים אֶת-הָרֹאשׁ וְאֶת

front of the Altar and throws blood upon the Altar wall. In the case of the elevation-offering, he throws it below the red line [חוט הסיקרא] that marks the Altar's midpoint (*Rashi; Sifra*).

סָבִיב — *All around*. This term indicates that there must be some blood on each of the Altar's four walls, but since the blood was to be *thrown*, it could not simply have been smeared in a straight line around the Altar. Rather the Kohen throws blood on the northeastern corner, so that it spreads onto the southern and western walls, and then repeats the process on the southwestern corner (*Rashi, Zevachim 53b*).

... אֲשֶׁר-פָּתַח — *Which is at the entrance*... The Altar of this verse is the outer one, which is in the Court-yard.

וְהִפְשִׁיט — *He shall skin*. The subject is not specified, since anyone may remove the hide. According to *Ha'amek Davar*, it is meritorious for it to be done by the owner. The hide itself is not holy and is divided among the Kohanim who are on duty that day.

אֹתָהּ לְנִתְחֶיהָ — *It into its pieces*. The word "its" implies that there is a precise order of how and into how many parts the offering should be

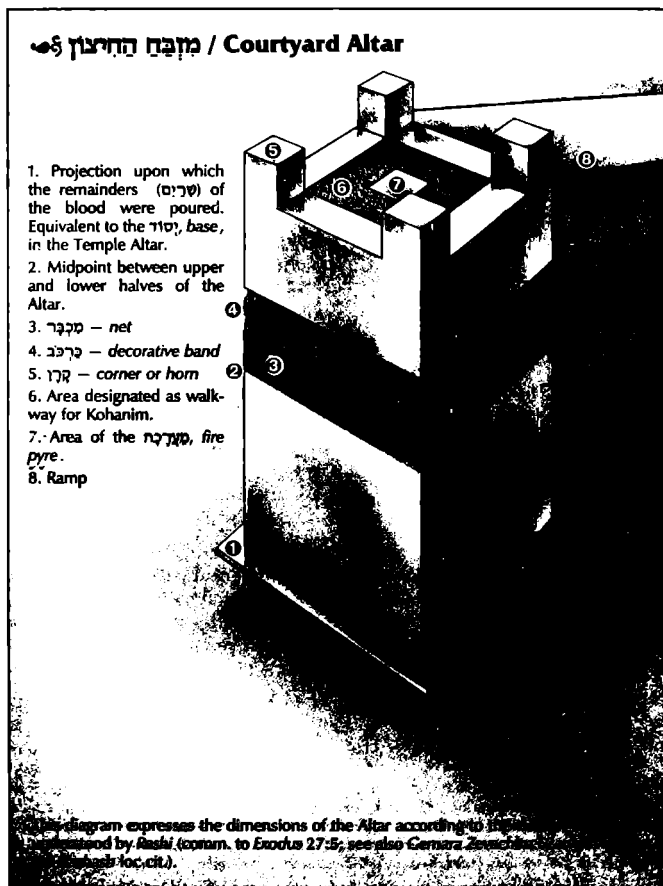
cut. Indeed, the Sages describe in detail the manner of dissection (*Tamid 3-4*). Moreover, the designated pieces may not be cut into smaller pieces (*Rashi*).

7. וְנָתַנוּ ... עַל-הָאֵשׁ — *Shall place ... on the fire*. Even though a Heavenly fire was on the Altar (9:24), the Kohanim are commanded to add fire of secular origin (*Rashi, Sifra*). Our verse assigns to the Kohanim the exclusive responsibility of placing wood on the Altar and arranging it.

בְּנֵי אֹהֶרֶן הַכֹּהֵן — *The sons of Aaron the Kohen*. In this verse, the word "Kohen", referring to Aaron, is superfluous. In the next verse, the plural "Kohanim", referring to his sons, is superfluous. The Sages derive that a priest's service is not valid unless he is acting as a *Kohen*, i.e., while he is dressed in his prescribed *כהונה*, *priestly vestments* (*Rashi; Sifra, see Zevachim 17b*).

8. אֶת הָרֹאשׁ — *The head*. Why is the head mentioned separately? The "pieces" of our verse refer back to those cited above (v. 6), but those pieces came only from the *skinned* body of the animal. Since the head was not skinned, it would not have been included among the "pieces", unless it was mentioned separately (*Rashi; Sifra*).

- 1 which is at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ⁶ He shall skin the elevation-offering and cut it into its pieces. ⁷ The sons of Aaron the Kohen shall place fire on the Altar, and arrange wood on the fire. ⁸ The sons of Aaron, the Kohanim, shall arrange the pieces, the head



וּקְרָא אֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְקָרְבוּ וּבָרְעוּ יָרֵחַ בָּמִים
וְהִקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַכֹּל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עָלֶיהָ
וְאֵשׁ רֵיחַ-נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: וְאֵם-
מִן-הַצֵּאֵן קָרְבָנוֹ מִן-הַכֶּשֶׁבִּים אוֹ מִן-הָעֵינִים
לְעֹלָה זָכָר תָּמִים יִקְרִיבוּ: וְשִׁחַט אֹתוֹ
עַל יָרֵךְ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ צָפֹנָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְזָרְקוּ
בָּנָי אֲהֵרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת-דָּמֹו עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ

And the fats. Our translation follows *Targum*; *Ramban* translates it as the fatty layer of tissue that separates the lower from the upper innards. The fats are specified because, on the Altar, they are used to cover the incision in the neck. This shows regard for God, since it would not befit the honor of the service for the incision to be exposed (*Rashi*; *Sifra*).

9. *Its innards and its feet* [lit. *knees*]. *Innards* refers to the stomach and the intestines. *Feet* refers to the lower part of the leg, below the knee (*Tamid* 4:2).

—*Shall wash*. Even by an Israelite (*Ramban*). The innards of other offerings are not placed upon the Altar and therefore need not be washed (*R' Yosef B'chor Shor*).

—*Shall cause . . . to go up in smoke*. After arranging the parts upon the fire, the Kohanim are still

responsible to tend the fire until the offering is consumed (*Ramban*).^[1]

— *An elevation-offering*. The Kohen who performs the service must have in mind that he is doing it for the purpose of an elevation-offering; otherwise the owner will not have discharged his obligation to bring the offering (*Rashi*; *Sifra*). However, even if the Kohen fails to have this necessary intent, the parts are offered on the Altar; the offering is not invalidated even though it is not credited to the owner (*Mishnah Zevachim* 1:1).

— *A fire-offering*. When slaughtering the offering, he should have in mind that he is doing it so that the offering will be burned on the Altar (*Rashi*; *Sifra*).

— *A satisfying aroma*. The aroma of the offering pleases God because, as the final step in the service, it signifies our compliance

1. The term *וְהִקְטִיר* is often translated as *he shall burn*, but the connotation is far different from ordinary burning. This term is never used when the purpose of the burning is to consume or to destroy; in such cases the verb is *שָׂרַף*. This verb is used only with reference to a sacrificial service. Various interpretations are offered for the term *הִקְטִירָה*: Our translation follows *Radak*, *Ibn Ezra*, and *Machberes Menachem*, who relate it to *קטור*, *column of smoke*. Thus the word is related to the purpose of the offering, that the sacrificial parts rise to heaven as a symbol of the

1 and the fats, on the wood that is on the fire, that is on the
9-11 Altar. ⁹ He shall wash its innards and its feet with water; and the Kohen shall cause it all to go up in smoke on the Altar— it is an elevation-offering, a fire-offering, a satisfying aroma to HASHEM.

¹⁰ And if one's offering is from the flock, from the sheep or the goats, for an elevation-offering: he shall offer an unblemished male. ¹¹ He shall slaughter it at the northern side of the Altar before HASHEM; and the sons of Aaron, the Kohanim, shall throw its blood on the

with His will; as the Sages express it, "for I have spoken and My will has been done" (Rashi; Sifra).

This sentiment is exemplified by Samuel's chastisement of King Saul: *Is HASHEM's desire in elevation- and peace-offerings as much as in obedience to the word of HASHEM? Behold — obedience is better than a good feast-offering; to heed is better than the fat of rams (I Samuel 15:22).*

10-13. Elevation-Offerings from Sheep and Goats

Since the laws of these animals are identical to those of elevation-offerings from the herd, it would have sufficed for the Torah to say in v. 3, *the herd and the flock*. In line with the principle that "Any chapter that was said and then repeated was repeated only because of something new that was included in it" (Sotah 3a), the Sages searched for slight variations and additions in this passage, from which to derive laws relating to both forms of elevation-offerings. It is beyond the scope of

this commentary to deal with the full range of such laws.

Abarbanel comments that the Torah lists the three forms of elevation-offerings — herd, flock, and birds — in separate paragraphs to imply that if one can afford to bring a bull, it is preferable to do so. If not, he may bring a sheep or goat, and if he cannot afford even that, he may bring a bird. It may be noted, however, that it is equally true that as long as one serves God according to his ability, his offering is appreciated and he is rewarded for having brought it. In the dictum of the Sages, *אֶחָד הַמִּרְבֵּה וְאֶחָד הַמִּנְיָן לְבוֹ לַשָּׁמַיִם*, *הַמִּמְעִיט, וְיִבְלֶבֶד שִׁיבִינִין לְבוֹ לַשָּׁמַיִם*, *It is the same whether one does more or less, provided he intends it for the sake of heaven (Berachos 5b).*

Although all the laws of this offering were taught to Moses in one sitting, as it were, verse 10 begins a new paragraph in the Torah. From this we derive that God paused between passages to give Moses time for reflection on what he had

owner bringing himself closer to God. According to Onkelos, who translates it as *הִרְקִיף, he shall raise up*, it refers to the process of elevating the sacrificial parts of the offering to the Altar (Nefesh Hager). R' Bachya derives the word from the Aramaic *קטר, knot*; thus the word is related to its purpose of creating a bond between God and the person bringing the offering.

יב סָכִיב: וְנָתַח אֹתוֹ לִנְתָחָיו וְאֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ וְאֶת־
פָּדְרוֹ וְעֶרְפוֹ הִכְהֵן אֹתָם עַל־הָעֵצִים אֲשֶׁר
יג עַל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְהִקְרִיב
וְהִפְרָעִים יִרְחֹץ בַּמַּיִם וְהִקְרִיב הִכְהֵן אֶת־
הַכֹּל וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עֲלֶיהָ הוּא אֲשֶׁה רִיחַ
נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה:

וְאִם מִן־הָעוֹף עֲלֶיהָ קָרְבָּנוֹ לַיהוָה וְהִקְרִיב שני יד
מִן־הַתְּרִים אוֹ מִן־בְּנֵי הַיוֹנָה אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ:
טו וְהִקְרִיבוּ הִכְהֵן אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּמָלַךְ אֶת־
רֹאשׁוֹ וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְנִמְצָה דָּמּוֹ עַל
טז קִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְהִסִּיר אֶת־מְרֹאתוֹ בְּנִצָּתָהּ
וְהִשְׁלִיךְ אֹתָהּ אֶצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ קֹדֶמָּה אֶל־

learned. If Moses required such reflection in order to understand the clear, perfect teachings of God properly, surely ordinary teachers and students must build such time into their studies (*Rashi* vs. 1, 10).

14-17. Elevation-Offering from Fowl

As the next few verses make clear, there is almost no similarity between the services of animals and fowl.

14. מִן־הָעוֹף — *Of fowl*. In the case of bird offerings, they may be either male or female. There is no requirement that birds be unblemished males, but the word *מן*, *from*, is exclusionary; it implies that some birds may not be used. Thus the Sages derive that birds are unacceptable if they are missing an entire limb (*Rashi*; *Sifra*).

Turtledoves ... — *הַתְּרִים* ... בְּנֵי הַיוֹנָה *young doves*. Turtledoves are acceptable only when they are mature, but doves are acceptable only when they are young. In both species, maturity is indicated by the glistening sheen of the feathers around the neck. Consequently, turtledoves may be used for offerings only after that stage arrives, while doves can be used only before then. During the period when the neck feathers are beginning to change [תְּחִלַּת הַצִּיּוּב], neither species may be used (*Rashi*; *Chullin* 22a).

15. אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ — *To the Altar*. The entire service is performed on top of the Altar. The Kohen takes the bird to the southeast corner of the Altar and begins the service described below (*Zevachim* 64b).

וְקָלַךְ — *Nip*. With his sharpened

1 Altar, all around. ¹² He shall cut it into its pieces, its head, and its fats. The Kohen shall arrange them on the wood that is on the fire that is on the Altar. ¹³ He shall wash the innards and the feet in water; the Kohen shall bring it all and cause it to go up in smoke on the altar — it is an elevation-offering, a fire-offering, a satisfying aroma to HASHEM.

¹⁴ If one's offering to HASHEM is an elevation-offering of fowl, he shall bring his offering from turtledoves or from young doves. ¹⁵ The Kohen shall bring it to the Altar, nip its head, and cause it to go up in smoke on the Altar, having pressed out its blood on the Altar's wall. ¹⁶ He shall remove its crop with its feathers, and he shall throw it near the Altar toward the east, to the

thumbnail, the Kohen presses into the back of the bird's neck, cuts through the bone and severs the gullet and windpipe (*Rashi*; *Sifra*). [This method of slaughter is used only for fowl offerings; if it were used in any other situation, the bird or animal would be forbidden.]

וְהִקְטִיר — *And cause it to go up in smoke.* As indicated in the translation, the bird is burned only after its blood has been drained against the Altar wall. According to *Ramban*, the burning is mentioned immediately after the nipping in order to indicate that the Kohen must have in mind as he nips the bird's neck that he will burn its head on the Altar.

16. מִרְאֵתוֹ בְּנִצָּתָהּ — *Its crop with its feathers.* The crop is a small pouch-like enlargement of the bird's gullet, where food is partially digested. The Kohen cuts a window-like opening in the skin opposite the crop, and removes the skin with its attached

feathers and the crop itself. According to another Talmudic opinion, **בְּנִצָּתָהּ** means not feathers, but stomach (*Rashi*, *Zevachim* 65a).

Why is the crop unfit to be offered on the Altar? Birds fly around and eat whatever they find. [Since the food in the crop is not fully digested, its contents are recognizable as "stolen" food.] It is unseemly for "stolen" food to be burned on the Altar. Animal offerings, however, do not present this problem, because they had been fed by their masters, consequently their innards could be offered on the Altar (*Rashi*).

אֶל-מְקוֹם הַאֵשׁ — *To the place of the ashes.* Ashes were removed every morning and placed on the floor of the Courtyard, to the east of the ramp leading up to the Altar (see 6:3). Also placed there, in addition to the crops of birds, were ashes from the Inner Altar and the Menorah. All were swallowed up miraculously at that spot (*Rashi*, *Yoma* 21a).

1 place of the ashes.¹⁷ He shall split it — with its feathers
 17 — he need not sever it. The Kohen shall cause it to go up
 in smoke on the Altar, on the wood that is on the fire —
 it is an elevation-offering, a fire-offering, a satisfying
 aroma to HASHEM.

2 **W**hen a person offers a meal-offering to HASHEM, his
 1 offering shall be of fine flour; he shall pour oil upon

very existence; the meal-offering proclaims the bearer's acknowledgment that his life is in God's hands. The oil symbolizes comfort and the frankincense represents joy and satisfaction. By means of his offering, the owner acknowledges that these, too, are from God alone. In a similar vein, *Ha'amek Davar* comments that the *minchah* is brought by someone wishing to rid himself of such undesirable character traits as anger, jealousy, greed, and cynicism. His way toward self-improvement is to recognize God's majesty and man's total dependence on Him. This is taught by the *minchah*.

According to *Abarbanel*, the meal-offering is mentioned immediately after the elevation-offering, because it too — even though part of it is eaten by the Kohanim — may be regarded as a sort of elevation-offering. This is indicated by vs. 3, 10 and 6:10, where even the part of the meal-offering that is eaten by Kohanim is described as of the *most holy*, from the fire-offerings of HASHEM.

1¹³. מִנְחַת סֵלֶה / Fine Flour (Unbaked Meal-Offering)

There are five varieties of meal-offerings, of which only the first is unbaked or uncooked. For that rea-

son, it is called simply מִנְחַת סֵלֶה, *fine-flour meal-offering*. If one vowed to bring a *minchah* without specifying a variety, he brings this one, since this verse states that if a person brings a "meal-offering," without identifying it further, it should be this one, meaning that an ordinary meal-offering is not baked as are the ones described later in the chapter. If one wishes to bring the other varieties of meal-offering, the owner must specify when making his vow which one he intends to offer (*Rashi*).

1. וְנִפְשׁ — A person [lit. a soul]. Of all who bring voluntary offerings, only someone who brings a meal-offering is described as a "soul." Since the very inexpensive meal-offering would be brought only by poor people, God says, "I will regard it as if he had offered his very soul" (*Rashi*; *Menachos* 104b).

וְנִפְשׁ יִהְיֶה קֶרְבֶּנוֹ — His offering shall be of fine flour. The flour must be of wheat. The minimum amount of flour in any meal-offering is one *issaron*, or 1/10 *ephah* (*Rashi*), which is equivalent in volume to 43.2 eggs. In modern terms, estimates of an *issaron* vary from 86.4-172.8 fluid ounces. See chart, Appendix.

In the course of a long and in-

וַיִּקְרָא י' מְקוֹם הַדָּשָׁן: וַשֹּׁטֵעַ אֹתוֹ בְּכַנְפָּיו לֹא יַבְדִּיל
וְהִקְטִיר אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַל-הָעֵצִים ז'
אֲשֶׁר עַל-הָאֵשׁ עָלָה הוּא אִשָּׁה רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ
א לִיהוָה: וְנִפְשׁ כִּי-תִקְרִיב קֶרְבָּן ב/א
מִנְחָה לַיהוָה סֶלֶת יִהְיֶה קֶרְבָּנוֹ וַיִּצַק עָלֶיהָ

17. וַשֹּׁטֵעַ אֹתוֹ — *He shall split it.* With his bare hands, the Kohen grasps the bird at its wings and bends it backward until its back is broken along its spine; however, its skin and flesh still hold it together in one piece. Then the entire bird is burned upon the Altar. The word כָּנָף means a wing with its feathers still on it, implying that they are not removed from the bird before it is burned upon the Altar, even though there is hardly a more repulsive smell than that of burning feathers. Why are the feathers left? Because bird offerings are commonly brought only by the poorest people, who

cannot afford anything more. If the feathers were removed, the remaining bird would be so tiny and insignificant as to embarrass the pauper who offers it. Better to endure the smell and let the Altar be adorned by the poor man's offering (*Rashi*).

רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ — *A satisfying aroma.* It is remarkable that the huge animal offering and the tiny bird offering are described identically as a *satisfying aroma*. It matters not to God whether one brings much or little, so long as one directs his heart sincerely to Heaven (*Rashi, Menachos 110a*).¹

II

11-10. מִנְחָה / Meal-Offerings

The *minchah*, meal-offering, consists of nothing more than finely ground wheat flour, oil, and frankincense (with water added in most cases); consequently, it is an inexpensive offering that is most likely to be brought by people too poor to afford anything better. Because such a per-

son extends himself to bring an offering despite his poverty, the Torah assigns special value to his deed, as noted below.

R' Hirsch comments that the name *minchah* represents much more than an ordinary gift; rather, it is a tribute to a superior. As the staple of the human diet, grain represents our

1. But if two people are equally sincere, shouldn't the one who brings a larger offering be more commended? *R' Bunam of P'schis'cha* explained it with a parable: Two merchants traveled to a fair, one taking a route that brought him there easily and early while the other's route turned out to be longer and more difficult. When asked to comment on his lengthy trip, the second traveler said, "What difference does it make, as long as I arrived in time for the fair!" Similarly in the case of the offerings: If a person has arrived at the point of achieving closeness to God through his offering, what does it matter whether his vehicle was large or small, expensive or cheap (*Sfas Emes*)?

ב שֶׁמֶן וְנָתַן עָלֶיהָ לִבְנָהּ: וְהִבִּיאָהּ אֶל-בְּנֵי
אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֲנִים וְקִמֵּץ מִשֶּׁם מְלֵא קִמְצוֹ
מִסְלָתָהּ וּמִשְׁמָנָהּ עַל כָּל-לִבְנָתָהּ וְהִקְטִיר
הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-אֹפְרֶתָהּ הַמְּזֻבָּחָה אֲשֶׁה רִיחַ
ג נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה: וְהִנּוֹתֶרְתָּ מִן-הַמִּנְחָה לְאֶהֱרֹן
ד וּלְבָנָיו קֹדֶשׁ קֹדָשִׁים מֵאֲשֵׁי יְהוָה: וְכִי
תִקְרַב קֶרְבֶּן מִנְחָה מֵאִפָּה תִגּוֹר סֵלֶת חִלּוֹת
מִצַּת בְּלוֹלֶת בְּשֶׁמֶן וּרְקִיקֵי מִצּוֹת מִשְׁחִים

volved process, the chaff was removed from the wheat kernels and the bran loosened. Then the kernels were ground roughly to split them. After being repeatedly sifted to remove any remaining bran and loose flour dust, the split kernels — which were known as *soless*, and were of high quality — were ground into the *soless* flour that was used for meal-offerings (*Menachos* 76 a-b, *Aruch HaShulchan He'Asid* 116:5).

שֶׁמֶן — Oil. Unlike the oil used for the Menorah, which could be only of the most superior variety, any olive oil was acceptable for meal-offerings. The quantity for all meal-offerings was one לֵוָי; a log contained the volume of six eggs, which, in modern terms, would be from 12-24 fluid ounces.

וְנָתַן ... לִבְנָהּ — And place frankincense. Although oil would be poured over the entire flour, because the flour and oil had to be mixed together, it was not necessary to put frankincense on the entire surface of the offering. If this had been done, however, it would be a simple matter to brush the frankin-

cense to the side so that it not interfere with the scooping procedure of the next verse (see *Sifra, Ravad; Sotah* 14b).

Frankincense was the hardened sap of a tree. It was in the form of granules, that were small, but easy to manipulate. According to *Sifra*, the amount of frankincense used was equal to a *kometz*, as described in the following verse.

2. וְקִמֵּץ — One of whom shall scoop. Of all the parts of the service mentioned so far, this is the first one that must be done by a Kohen (*Rashi*). However, there is another service that has not been mentioned as yet that must be performed by a Kohen: *hagashah*, bringing the entire offering to the Altar (v. 8). That service is done before קְמִיצָה [*k'mitzah*], scooping (*Ramban*).

מִשֶּׁם — From it [lit. from there]. The words "from there" indicate that the scooping may be done even at the place where the owner had handed the offering to the Kohen, even though the scoop will later be brought close to the Altar, as in verse 8 (*Rashi; Sifra*).

2 it and place frankincense upon it. ² He shall bring it to
2-4 the sons of Aaron the Kohanim, one of whom shall scoop
 his three fingers-full from it, from its fine flour and
 from its oil, as well as all its frankincense; and the
 Kohen shall burn its memorial portion upon the Altar—
 it is a fire-offering, a satisfying aroma to HASHEM. ³ The
 remnant of the meal-offering is for Aaron and his sons;
 it is most holy, from the fire-offerings of HASHEM.

⁴ When you offer a meal-offering that is baked in an
 oven, it shall be of fine flour: unleavened loaves mixed
 with oil, or unleavened wafers smeared with oil.

על כל-לִבְנָתָהּ — As well as all its
 frankincense. When the Kohen
 makes k'mitzah, his hand may
 contain only flour and oil; the
 frankincense is to be collected later
 and burned on the Altar together
 with the kometz. It is not necessary
 for the frankincense to be spread out
 over the entire surface of the flour
 (Rashi).

מלא קמצו — His three fingers-full.
 There is no English word for kometz.
 It is not a handful; rather the Kohen
 cups his three middle fingers over his
 palm and scoops up as much of the
 flour-oil mixture as his hand will
 hold. It must be filled to capacity but
 none of the mixture may poke out
 from between or outside his fingers.
 The Sages describe k'mitzah as one
 of the most difficult services (Rashi).

אֶזְבֵּחַתָּהּ — Its memorial portion. The
 kometz and frankincense are called
 its memorial portion because the
 owner finds favor before God
 through them, when they are burned
 upon the Altar (Rashi).

3. קָדֵשׁ קָרְשִׁים — Most holy. When
 the Torah designates an offering as

"most holy", its edible parts may be
 eaten only by male Kohanim in a
 state of ritual purity, only inside the
 Temple or Tabernacle Courtyard.

4. מֵאֲפֶה תֵנּוּר / Oven-Baked Meal- Offering

חלות ... רִקְקִין — Loaves ... wafers.
 There are two forms in which this
 meal-offering may be baked. Loaves
 are high and fluffy — but, like all
 meal-offerings, they may not be
 allowed to become leavened. Wafers
 are low and flat. The amount of flour
 is an issaron (see v.1), and it is
 divided into these ten loaves (Rashi).
 Both these breads are kneaded with
 warm water, which has a tendency
 to make dough become chametz
 rather quickly (Menachos 55a), but
 the Kohanim are so zealous and
 efficient that they would complete
 the preparation of the breads before
 leavening occurs (Pesachim 36a). In
 the case of all meal-offerings that
 must be baked, warm water is added
 to the flour so that it can be kneaded
 into a dough.

מְשֻׁחִים ... בְּלוּלֹת — Mixed ...
 smeared. In the preparation of the

וּיִקְרָא בַשֶּׁמֶן: וְאִם-מִנְחָה עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
 קֶרֶבֶנֶךָ סֵלֶת בְּלוּלָה בְשֶׁמֶן מִצָּה תִהְיֶה:
 וּפָתוֹת אֹתָהּ פָתִים וְיִצְקָתָ עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן מִנְחָה
 שְׁלִישִׁי ז' הוּא: וְאִם-מִנְחַת מִרְחֶשֶׁת
 ח קֶרֶבֶנֶךָ סֵלֶת בְּשֶׁמֶן תַּעֲשֶׂה: וְהִבֵּאתָ אֶת-
 הַמִּנְחָה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה מֵאֲלֵה לִיהוָה
 וְהִקְרִיבָהּ אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן וְהִגִּישָׁהּ אֶל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:
 ט וְהָרִים הַכֹּהֵן מִן-הַמִּנְחָה אֶת-אֶזְכָּרְתָּהּ
 וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֵשָׁה רִים נִיחֹם לִיהוָה:
 י וְהִנּוֹתָרְתָּ מִן-הַמִּנְחָה לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו קֹדֶשׁ
 יא קֹדָשִׁים מֵאֲשֵׁי יְהוָה: כָּל-הַמִּנְחָה אֲשֶׁר
 תִּקְרִיבוּ לִיהוָה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה חֵמֶץ כִּי כָל-

loaves, the oil is mixed into dough; it is this abundance of oil that helps make the loaves fluffy. In the case of the wafers, however, most of the oil is held back to be smeared on the wafers after the baking (Rambam *Hil. Maaseh HaKorbanos* 13:8).

The Sages disagree, however, regarding the *procedure* of smearing oil onto the wafers (*Menachos* 75a). Some say that the Kohen applies oil to the loaves over and over until the entire *log* is used up. Others say that the Kohen smears each wafer once in the outline of the Greek letter *chi*, and the rest of the oil is used by the Kohanim in the preparation of their food (*Rashi*). There are various opinions as to the shape of the form in which the oil is to be smeared. *Rashi* (*Exodus* 29:3) says it resembles a Hebrew י; according to *Rambam*, it resembles an x; others say it is similar to the Hebrew ט (*Rashi*,

as cited by *Tos., Menachos* 75a).

5-6. מִנְחָה עַל-מִזְבֵּחַ / Pan-Baked Meal-Offering

5. הַמִּזְבֵּחַ — *The pan*. According to *Rashi*, this pan was wide and shallow, so that the oil would burn away in the frying process, leaving fairly hard, flat, unleavened pancakes. According to *Rambam* (*Hil. Ma'aseh Hakorbanos* 13:7), the utensil was not a pan, but a flat metal sheet. In his view, the offering's ingredients were kneaded into a thick dough so that it would not spread out and spill over the edges of the sheet.

6. פָּתוֹת אֹתָהּ פָתִים — *You shall break it into pieces*. This procedure applies to all cooked or baked meal-offerings in order to make it possible for the Kohen to perform *kemitzah* (*Rashi*). Each loaf or wafer is folded and then folded over once again, thus breaking it into at least four parts (*Sifra*).

⁵ If your offering is a meal-offering on the pan, it shall be of fine flour mixed with oil, it shall be unleavened.

⁶ You shall break it into pieces and pour oil upon it — it is a meal-offering.

⁷ If your offering is a meal-offering in a deep pan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. ⁸ You are to present to HASHEM the meal-offering that will be prepared from these; you shall bring it to the Kohen who shall bring it close to the Altar.

⁹ The Kohen shall lift up its memorial portion from the meal-offering and burn it on the Altar — a fire-offering, a satisfying aroma to HASHEM. ¹⁰ The remnant of the meal-offering is for Aaron and his sons; it is most holy, from the fire-offerings of HASHEM.

¹¹ Any meal-offering that you offer to HASHEM may not be prepared leavened, for you shall not cause to go

7. מִנְחַת מִרְחֶשֶׁת / Deep-Pan Meal-Offering

מִרְחֶשֶׁת — *Deep pan*. Since the pan used in the Temple for this offering is narrow and deep, the oil will remain concentrated and the fried offering will be soft (*Rashi*; *Sifra*). *Rambam* adds that the dough is made loose, so that it will not harden during the frying.

סֶלֶת בְּשֶׁמֶן — *Fine flour mixed with oil*. This was the first step of all meal-offerings. First, oil is poured into the vessel, and then the flour is poured on top of the oil. The next step was to pour oil on the flour and mix them. Finally, oil was poured on the mixture (*Rashi*, v. 5.; *Menachos* 74b).

וְהִגִּישָׁהּ — *Who shall bring it close*. This commandment applies to all meal-offerings of this chapter. After the *minchah* has been mixed, baked

or fried, as the case may be, and the frankincense has been sprinkled upon it, the Kohen brings the vessel containing the offering to the southwestern corner of the Altar and touches the vessel to the corner (*ibid.* 13:12).

וְהָרִים — *Shall lift up*. The Kohen scoops up the *kometz*, the three fingers-full, which will be placed on the Altar fire to go up in smoke (*Rashi*). As noted above, however, the frankincense, too, will be burned on the Altar.

כֹּל-הַמִּנְחָה — *Any meal-offering*. Not only those mentioned in this chapter, but all meal-offerings mentioned anywhere in the Torah — whether the portion burned on the Altar or the remnant that is eaten by the Kohanim — may not be leavened (*Sifra*). This does not apply to the

שאר וכל-דבש לא-תקטירו ממנו אשה
 יב ליהוה: קרבן ראשית תקריבו אתם ליהוה
 יג ואל-המזבח לא-יעלו לריח ניחח: וכל-
 קרבן מנחתך במלח תמלח ולא תשביח
 מלח ברית אלהיך מעל מנחתך על
 יד כל-קרבנה תקריב מלח: ואם-
 תקריב מנחת בכורים ליהוה אביב קלוי
 באש גרש פרמל תקריב את מנחת
 טו בכוריך: ונתת עליה שמן ושמת עליה

הלחם, the *Two Loaves* of Shavuot (23:17), no part of which is placed on the Altar; our verse specifies only offerings that go up in smoke.

דבש — *Fruit-honey*. Since the next verse states that the foods mentioned in this verse may be used for *bikkurim*, first fruits, it is clear that the "honey" of this verse cannot be bee honey, since honey is not a food that is brought as a first fruit (*Mizrachi*). Consequently, the *d'vash* of this verse is fruit, which can produce a sweet, honey-like nectar (*Rashi*).^[1]

12. קרבן ראשית — *A first-fruit offering*. Leaven and fruit may be used for two offerings, both of which may be described as first-fruit offerings. They are: (a) *Bikkurim*, which are the first produce of the seven species for which *Eretz Yisrael* is praised, as described in *Deuteronomy* 26:1-11; and (b) שתי הלחם, the two leavened loaves of wheat flour that

are offered on Shavuot.

The Shavuot offering is called a "first" because it is the first wheat flour offering of the new crop; only after these two loaves have been offered is it permitted to use the new wheat crop for meal-offerings. However, as the verse goes on to state, neither of these offerings may be placed on the Altar (*Rashi*).

There is another "first" offering of grain: the *omer* offering of barley that is brought on the second day of Pesach. The *omer* is not leavened, and for that reason its *kometz* may be burned on the Altar (*Menachos* 67b).

13. ברית מלח / Covenant of Salt

During the second day of Creation, God created a division between the waters that were above the firmament and the lower waters on earth (*Genesis* 1:7). The Midrash records that the earthly waters protested that they, too, wished to be close to God. To comfort them, God made a

1. The prohibition against offerings of leaven and fruit-honey convey a moral lesson regarding the full range of man's service of God. Man should not be sluggish, as symbolized by the slow process of leavening; nor should he dedicate himself to the pursuit of pleasures, as symbolized by the sweetness of honey (*Chinuch*).

2 up in smoke from any leavening or fruit-honey as a
12-15 fire-offering to HASHEM. ¹² You shall offer them as a
 first-fruit offering to HASHEM, but they may not go up
 upon the Altar for a satisfying aroma.

¹³ You shall salt your every meal-offering with salt;
 you may not discontinue the salt of your God's
 covenant from upon your meal-offering — on your
 every offering shall you offer salt.

¹⁴ When you bring a meal-offering of the first grain to
 HASHEM: from ripe ears, parched over fire, ground from
 plump kernels, shall you offer the meal-offering of
 your first grain. ¹⁵ You shall put oil on it and place

covenant that the water would have a
 share in the Temple service. Salt,
 which comes from the sea, would be
 placed on sacrificial parts that go on
 the Altar, and fresh water would be
 poured on the Altar every Succos.

Ramban comments that salt has
 two properties: It is destructive, for it
 prevents plants from growing; and it
 is helpful, for it preserves food. The
 Covenant of Salt teaches that the
 sacrificial service, if performed prop-
 erly and sincerely, preserves Israel,
 but if the service is neglected, it brings
 about destruction and exile.

קרבן מנחתך — *Your ... meal-offering.*
 Only the *kometz* and frankincense
 are salted. Similarly, the command-
 ment at the end of the verse, which
 extends the salting to all offerings,
 refers only to the sacrificial parts that
 go on the Altar fire (*Sifra*). [This is
 indicated by the superfluous word
korban, which implies that our verse
 refers only to the part that goes on the
 Altar.]

ברית — *Covenant.* Salt, like a
 covenant, denotes permanence, be-

cause it preserves what was, and
 inhibits change. Therefore salt sym-
 bolizes God's immutable covenant
 (R' Hirsch).

14-17. The Omer

On the second day of Pesach, the
 first offering of the new grain crop is
 brought. It is a communal offering
 known as the *Omer*, and before it no
 grain of the new crops may be eaten
 (see 23:9-14). Our passage describes
 the contents of the meal-offering,
 which, unlike all other communal
 and nearly all private meal-offerings,
 is of barley.

14. אָבִיב — *Ripe ears.* The Sages
 derive hermeneutically from this
 word that the grain required for this
 offering is barley (*Rashi; Menachos*
 68b).

קָלִי בָאֵשׁ — *Parched over fire.* The
 kernels are parched lightly in order to
 dry them a bit so that they can be
 ground easily (*Rashi*).

וְרֵשׁ כֶּרֶמֶל — *Plump kernels.* [The
 offering is composed of flour milled
 during the process of making groats

וּקְרָא ב/טז טו לְבִנְיָה מִנְחָה הוּא: וְהִקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־
אֻזְבֵּרְתָּהּ מִגֶּרֶשׁהּ וּמִשְׁמֶנֶהּ עַל כָּל־לִבְנֶתָהּ
אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה:

ג/א-ב רביעי א וְאִם־זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים קָרְבָּנוֹ אִם מִן־הַבֶּקָר הוּא
מִקְרִיב אִם־זֶכֶר אִם־נִקְבָּה תָּמִים יִקְרִיבוּ
ב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְסִמֶּן יָדוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ קָרְבָּנוֹ
וְשָׁחֲטוּ פֶתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְזָרְקוּ בְּנֵי אֹהֶל־
הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב:

from freshly cut, soft, moist kernels.]
The grain is broken into coarse pieces
(*Rashi*), but after extensive sifting,
the result is a fine flour. The bran

remains coarse and is trapped by the
sifter, while the fine flour from the
center of the kernel passes through
(*Rashi* to *Menachos* 66a).

III

1. שְׁלָמִים / Peace Offerings.

Peace offerings are brought voluntarily by a person or a group of people who are moved to express their love of God, their gratitude for His goodness, and to enhance their closeness to Him. In the words of *Sforno* (*Kavanos HaTorah*): The peace-offering is a tribute to God, Blessed is He, when the person moved to offer it recognizes the ways of His goodness and His constant goodness to us.

Various reasons are offered for the name *shelamim*, or peace-offerings. According to *Rashi* (from *Sifra*), the name is derived from *shalom*, *peace*. The peace-offering has the spiritual capacity of increasing peace in the world. Alternatively, it symbolizes the peace that can be brought about

by satisfying all legitimate needs; consequently, the peace-offering has a portion for the Altar, a portion for the Kohanim, and a portion for the owners.

Ramban derives the word from *shleimus*, *wholeness*, because the person who brings the peace-offering has not been motivated by a need to atone for sin, but by a sense of wholeness and a free-willed desire for perfection.

According to *Korban Aharon*, the peace expressed by the name is the harmony between the Heavenly world of the spirit and the earthly world of materialism. One who brings a peace-offering seeks to unite the two worlds.^[1]

זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים — *A feast peace-offering.*
Although the literal meaning of זֶבַח

1. *Panim Yafos* comments that it is axiomatic that God created the world in order to shower His benefits upon man. Unlike the elevation-offering that represents only man's yearning to be united with God, because the entire offering is burned on His Altar, the peace-offering serves two purposes. Part of it is an offering to God that is consumed on the Altar, while the

2 frankincense on it — it is a meal-offering. ¹⁶ The Kohen
16 shall cause its memorial portion to go up in smoke —
from its flour and its oil, as well as its frankincense — it
is a fire-offering to HASHEM.

3 If his offering is a feast peace-offering, if he offers it
1-2 from cattle — whether male or female — unblemished
shall he offer it before HASHEM. ² He shall lean his hand
upon the head of the offering and slaughter it at the
entrance of the Tent of Meeting; the sons of Aaron, the
Kohanim, shall throw the blood upon the Altar, all

is slaughter, it has a secondary meaning as well. Rashi (Bereishis 31:54) comments that where the context demands it, the word is translated as *feast*. R' Hirsch and HaK'sav V'HaKabbalah note that the word *zevach* does not appear in connection with any other kind of offering. Therefore, they hold that it refers to the manner in which the peace offering was eaten. It was a *feast*, because "during the eating of the peace-offering's flesh, [the owner] would invite his family, friends, and acquaintances to partake of his feast, and in the assembly of friends he would praise HASHEM and tell them of his kindness."

Onkelos translates זָבַח literally as *slaughter*. The Talmud derives from the juxtaposition in our verse of *slaughter* with *peace-offering* that it is incumbent upon the one performing the slaughter to bear in mind that he is doing so for the purpose of a peace-offering (*Zevachim* 4a).

זָבַח ... זָכָר — *Male or female*. Unlike the elevation-offering, which

must be male, there is no such restriction here. R' Hirsch comments that this lack of gender restriction helps clarify the reasons for which one may elect to bring a peace-offering. Someone who feels himself to be strong and independent — as symbolized by a male animal — may wish to express his gratitude to God. But someone in a state of dependence — symbolized by the female — may be equally content and grateful. Happiness need not depend on dominion over others or independence of others. One may feel whole and useful even in a position that may appear to be secondary. Power is not necessarily the best indication of success in life.

2. וְשָׁמַךְ — *He shall lean*. Since the peace-offering does not come to atone for a sin, no confession is made during this leaning. Rather, he praises God at this point (Hil. Ma'aseh HaKorbanos 3:15).

פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד — *At the entrance of the Tent of Meeting*. In the case of

rest goes to the Kohanim and the owner, thus symbolizing God's yearning, as it were, to provide for His creatures.

וְהִקְרִיב מִזֶּבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה אֶת־
הַחֹלֶב הַמִּכְסָּה אֶת־הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת כָּל־הַחֹלֶב
אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַקֶּרֶב: וְאֶת שְׁתֵּי הַכְּלִיֹּת וְאֶת־
הַחֹלֶב אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵהוֹן אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַבֶּסְלִים וְאֶת־
הַיִּתְרָתוֹ עַל־הַכֶּבֶד עַל־הַכְּלִיֹּת יִסְרְנָה:
וְהִקְטִירוּ אֹתוֹ בְּנִי־אַהֲרֹן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ עַל־
הָעֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַעֲצִים אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֵשׁ
אִשָּׁה רֵיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה:

וְאִם־מִן־הֶצֶאן קָרְבָּנוֹ לְזִבְחַ שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה
וְזָכַר אוֹ נִקְבָּה תָּמִים יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ: אִם־בֶּשֶׂב
הוּא־מִקְרִיב אֶת־קָרְבָּנוֹ וְהִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה: וְסָמַךְ אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ קָרְבָּנוֹ וְשָׁחַט
אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְזָרְקוּ בְּנֵי אֹהֲרֹן
אֶת־דָּמֹו עַל־חֲמֹזֶבֶת סָבִיב: וְהִקְרִיב מִזֶּבַח
הַשְּׁלָמִים אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה חֹלְבוֹ הָאֵלִיָּה
תְּמִימָה לְעֹמֶת הָעֵצָה יִסְרְנָה וְאֶת־הַחֹלֶב
הַמִּכְסָּה אֶת־הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת כָּל־הַחֹלֶב אֲשֶׁר

קָרְשִׁים קָלִים, *offerings of lesser sanctity*, the entire Courtyard is an acceptable place of slaughter, unlike holier offerings, which must be slaughtered in the northern part of the Courtyard. From the word *pesach*, lit. *opening*, the Sages derive that a slaughter may not take place until the Sanctuary door has been opened (*Zevachim* 55b).

3. הַחֹלֶב — *The fat*. In other contexts, this word means “the choicest”. Since the fat of an offering is the part that goes on the Altar, it is the most honored part of the offering. Conse-

quently, “fat” is used frequently in Scripture to denote the finest as in *Numbers* 18:30, where the part of a crop designated as the tithe is called *חֹלֶב*, lit. *its fat* (*Ramban*).

Ramban also notes that the fats that are burned on the Altar and are also forbidden as food peel away from the meat. The fat familiar on kosher meat is attached to the meat, and marbled with it.

הַמִּכְסָּה — *That covers*. A clothlike membrane of fat that spreads over the entire abdomen (*Rashi*, *Exodus* 29:13).

around.³ From the feast peace-offering he shall offer as a fire-offering to HASHEM: the fat that covers the innards, and all the fat that is upon the innards;⁴ and both kidneys with the fat that is upon them, that is upon the flanks, and he shall remove the diaphragm as well as the liver and as well as the kidneys.⁵ The sons of Aaron shall cause it to go up in smoke on the Altar, besides the elevation-offering that is on the wood that is on the fire — a fire-offering, a satisfying aroma to HASHEM.

⁶ If his feast peace-offering to HASHEM is from the flock — whether male or female — unblemished shall he offer it.⁷ If he offers a sheep as his offering, he shall bring it before HASHEM.⁸ He shall lean his hands upon the head of his offering and slaughter it before the Tent of Meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall throw its blood upon the Altar, all around;⁹ From the feast peace-offering he shall offer as a fire-offering to HASHEM its choicest part — the entire tail — he shall remove it above the kidneys; and the fat that covers the innards and all the fat

עַל-הַקֶּרֶב — Upon the innards. [This is not a membrane, but fat that adheres to the individual organs.]

4. עַל הַקְּסָלִים — That is upon the flanks. The fat that covers the kidneys is situated on top of the animal's flanks; as it goes down the legs, the fat is covered by meat (Rashi).

הַיִּתְרָח — The diaphragm. The liver and kidneys are attached to the diaphragm. As the Kohen cuts away the diaphragm, he cuts with it part of the liver and the kidneys (Rashi).

5. עַל-הַעֲלָה — Besides the elevation-offering. The first offering of the day — not only for the sacrificial service, but also to be burned upon the Altar

— is the tamid, the daily continual elevation-offering (Rashi; see Pesachim 58b).

6. מִן-הַצֹּאן — From the flock. The term צֹאן, includes both sheep and goats, but since the service is slightly different for the two, they are given separately.

9. הָאֵלֶּה — The tail. The tail, substantial and very fat, is the choicest part of the sheep (Rashi; see Pesachim 3b).

לְעֵמֶת הַצֶּצֶה — Above the kidneys. [Since the vertebrae of the tail grow out of the spine, the verse must tell us at which point the tail should be severed from the body.]

י על-הקרב: ואת שתי הפלית ואת-החלב
אשר עלהון אשר על-הפסלים ואת-
היתרת על-הבדר על-הפלית יסירנה:
יא והקטירו הכהן המזבחה לחם אשה
ליהוה:

יב-יג ואם עז קרבנו והקריבו לפני יהוה: וסמך
את-ידו על-ראשו ושחט אתו לפני אהל
מועד וזרקו בלי אהרן את-דמו על-המזבח
יד סביב: והקריב ממנו קרבנו אשה ליהוה
את-החלב המכסה את-הקרב ואת כל-
טו החלב אשר על-הקרב: ואת שתי הפלית
ואת-החלב אשר עלהון אשר על-הפסלים
ואת-היתרת על-הבדר על-הפלית
טז יסירנה: והקטירם הכהן המזבחה לחם
אשה לריח ניחח כל-חלב ליהוה: חקת
יז עולם לדורותיכם בכל מושבתיכם כל-חלב
וכל-דם לא תאכלו:

14. וְהִקְרִיב . . . קֶרְבָּנוּ — *He shall bring its offering from it. Only a Kohen, whose required role in the service began in the previous verse, may place the sacrificial parts [its offering] upon the Altar.*

16. כָּל-חֵלֶב לַיהוָה — *All the choice parts are for HASHEM. As noted above, the word chelev means both fats and choice parts. In the context of this verse, it cannot mean fats because the kidneys, di-*

aphragm and liver are not fatty.

This apparently superfluous phrase is meant to teach that these parts must be offered on the Altar in the case of *all* offerings, even where the Torah does not mention it specifically, such as the *Pesach* and *ma'aser* offerings (*Sifra*).

17. חֻקַּת עוֹלָם — *An eternal decree. Even during the Temple era (Sifra). We might have thought otherwise: During the years in the*

that is on the innards; ¹⁰ and both kidneys and the fat that is on them, that is upon the flanks; and shall remove the diaphragm as well as the liver, as well as the kidneys. ¹¹ The Kohen shall cause it to go up in smoke on the Altar; it is the food of the fire — for HASHEM.

¹² If his offering is a goat, he shall bring it before HASHEM. ¹³ He shall lean his hand upon its head and slaughter it before the Tent of Meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall throw its blood upon the Altar, all around.

¹⁴ He shall bring its offering from it as a fire-offering to HASHEM: the fat that covers the innards and all the fat that is on the innards; ¹⁵ and both kidneys and the fat that is on them, that is on the flanks; and he shall remove the diaphragm as well as the liver, as well as the kidneys. ¹⁶ The Kohen shall cause them to go up in smoke on the Altar; it is the food of the fire for a satisfying aroma, all the choice parts are for HASHEM.

¹⁷ It is an eternal decree for your generations in all your dwelling places; you may not consume any fat or any blood.

Wilderness, when it was forbidden to consume meat except from peace-offerings, all blood and fat would have been used as part of the sacrificial service; consequently it would have seemed logical that only in the Wilderness would it be forbidden to

eat them. In Eretz Yisrael, however, where it was permitted to slaughter animals for personal use, there would seem to be no reason to prohibit blood and fats. Thus our verse states that the prohibition is eternal (*Mal-bim*).^[1]

1. A reason for the prohibition against eating blood and fat is suggested by the juxtaposition between the prohibition and the commandment to place them upon the Altar. Since they can be used in God's Temple service, it would be disrespectful for us to eat them. When the Jew in the Diaspora refrains from consuming such foods, he demonstrates his yearning for the restoration of the Temple and its holy service (*R' Hirsch*).

This explains why it is permitted to eat the fat of kosher species of animals that are not eligible for Temple offerings. Blood, however, is forbidden under all circumstances; see comm. to 17:11.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דְּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר נֶפֶשׁ כִּי-תִחַטָּא בְשִׁגְגָה מִכָּל
מִצְוַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲשֶׂינָהּ וְעִשְׂתָּהּ מֵאַחַת
ג מִהֵנָּה: אִם הִכְהִין הַמְּשִׁיחַ יִחַטָּא לְאַשְׁמַת
הָעָם וְהִקְרִיב עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא פֶּר
ד בֶּן-בִּקְרָת תָּמִים לַיהוָה לְחַטָּאת: וְהִבִּיא
אֶת-הַפֶּר אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
וְסָמַךְ אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל-רֹאשׁ הַפֶּר וְשַׁחַט אֶת-

IV

Sin-Offering / קָרְבַּן חַטָּאת 5

With this chapter, we come to the sort of offerings that are required, unlike the *voluntary* offerings of the previous three chapters. This chapter deals with four kinds of sin-offerings; and two more are found in the next. The offerings discussed in our chapter are required only if the sin was committed *בְּשׁוּגָה*, *through inadvertence*, that came about through carelessness; if it had been committed *בְּמִזִּיד*, *intentionally*, an animal offering is insufficient to achieve atonement. The category of sin for which this offering is brought is very limited: It is a negative commandment (*Rashi, Sifra*) for which the penalty would have been *כָּרַת*, *spiritual excision of the soul*, if it had been committed intentionally. *Ramban* (1:2) points out that even unintentional sins blemish the soul and require that it be purified. Had the sinner in his heart regarded them with the proper gravity, they would not have occurred.

Furthermore, the sin must be committed through an action. Thus,

there is no *chattas* for the grievous sin of blasphemy, because the speech is not considered a deed; nor is there a *chattas* for the sin of not circumcising oneself (for which the penalty is *karet*), for two reasons: The sin is one of omission rather than commission, and circumcision is a positive rather than a negative commandment.

The four cases of sin-offerings in this chapter vary, as will be noted in the text and commentary.

1. וַיְדַבֵּר ה' — *HASHEM spoke*. [As noted in the comm. to 1:1, this phrase indicates that God called Moses lovingly, by name. This summons has not appeared since 1:1, because all the offerings of the first three chapters were alike in that they were voluntary, and they were therefore taught to Moses in one session, except that there were pauses between passages to allow him to contemplate upon and assimilate the material.]

2. נֶפֶשׁ — *If a person* [lit. *soul*]. Since thoughts originate in the soul, the sins that require this offering — sins

HASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: ² Speak to the Children of Israel, saying: When a person will sin unintentionally from among all the commandments of HASHEM that may not be done, and he commits one of them.

³ If the anointed Kohen will sin, bringing guilt upon the people; for the error that he had committed he shall offer a young bull, unblemished, to HASHEM as a sin-offering. ⁴ He shall bring the bull to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting before HASHEM; he shall lean his hand upon the head of the bull, and he shall slaughter

born of careless inadvertence — are attributed to the soul, and it is the soul that is cleansed by means of the offering (*Ramban*).

אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲשֶׂינָהּ — *That may not be done*. This implies that only for a negative commandment — *that may not be done* — is there a *chata*s (*Sifra*).

3-12. פֶּרֶךְ בְּהֵן מְשִׁיחַ / The Bull of the Anointed Kohen

3. הַבְּהֵן הַמְשִׁיחַ — *The anointed Kohen*. This passage applies only to a Kohen Gadol who has been elevated to his office through anointment (*Horayos* 11b). Thus it would not apply to those who assumed office after Moses' oil of anointment was hidden by King Josiah (*Yoma* 52b). Such Kohanim would bring the sin-offering of ordinary Jews.

לְאַשְׁמֶת הָעָם — *Bringing guilt upon the people*. The Kohen Gadol is the

people's emissary to pray for them and bring them atonement. His sin brings guilt upon them all (*Rashi*). *Ibn Ezra* and *Sforno* interpret in an opposite vein: If such a great person sins, it must be that the low spiritual level of the people dragged him down.

The Sages derive hermeneutically from this verse that our passage refers to an unusual kind of sin. The Kohen Gadol must be a scholar who is qualified to rule on complex halachic matters, and in that role he decides that a particular act is permitted — and he performs the act. He has erred, however, for the deed is one that would incur *karet* had it been done intentionally, and thus obligates him to bring a sin-offering (*Rashi, Sifra; Horayos* 7a).

פֶּרֶךְ בְּנֶ-בָקָר — *A young bull*. More than a year old, but less than three (*Sifra*).

4. לִפְנֵי יְהוָה — *Before HASHEM*. North of the Altar; see 6:18.⁽¹⁾

1. Here and in the case of the next offering, where the Sanhedrin caused the entire nation to sin, the Torah stresses that the bull be brought to the front of the Sanctuary, because it is a source of pride that the nation's most august personages do not hesitate to acknowledge and seek atonement for their sins. It is like a king who has been wronged by his friend. When the friend sends a gift as a symbol of his remorse, the king proudly displays it at the entrance to his palace (*R' Bachya*).

ה הפֹּר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַמָּשִׁיחַ מִדָּם
ו הפֹּר וְהָבִיא אֹתוֹ אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וּטְבַל
הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-אֶצְבָּעוֹ בְּדָם וְהִזָּה מִן-הַדָּם שְׁבַע
פְּעָמִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶת-פָּנָי פֶּרֶכַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ:
ז וְנָתַן הַכֹּהֵן מִן-הַדָּם עַל-קִרְנֹת מִזְבֵּחַ
קֹטֶרֶת הַסָּמִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד וְאֵת אֶל-כָּל-הָדָם הַפֹּר יִשְׁפֹךְ אֶל-יְסוֹד
ח מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה אֲשֶׁר-פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וְאֵת-
כָּל-חֶלֶב פֶּר הַחֲטָאֹת יָרִים מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת-
הַחֶלֶב הַמְכַסֶּה עַל-הַקָּרֵב וְאֵת כָּל-הַחֶלֶב
ט אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַקָּרֵב: וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי הַבָּלִיֹּת וְאֵת-
הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַבְּסָלִים
וְאֵת-הַיִּתְרֹת עַל-הַכֶּבֶד עַל-הַבָּלִיֹּת
י יִסִּירָנָה: בְּאֲשֶׁר יוֹרֵם מִשּׁוֹר זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים
יא וְהִקְטִירָם הַכֹּהֵן עַל מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה: וְאֵת-
עוֹר הַפֹּר וְאֵת-כָּל-בָּשָׂרוֹ עַל-רָאשׁוֹ וְעַל-

5. וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַמָּשִׁיחַ — *The anointed Kohen shall take. He accepts the blood in a vessel. As the verse states, the service should be performed by the Kohen Gadol; however, the superfluous word Kohen teaches that the service is not disqualified if it was performed by an ordinary Kohen (Sifra).*

אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד — *To the Tent of Meeting.* The exceptional nature of this offering now becomes apparent. Whereas all ordinary offerings have their blood service performed exclusively on the Altar in the Courtyard — and would be disqualified if the

blood were brought into the Sanctuary — this offering has its blood service performed inside.

6. פֶּרֶכַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ — *The Curtain of the Holy.* The Curtain separates the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Sanctuary. Behind the Curtain is the Holy Ark, and the blood is sprinkled toward the two-and-a-half cubit width of the Ark. However, it is not required that the blood actually touch the Curtain (*Rashi; Sifra*).

שְׁבַע פְּעָמִים — *Seven times.* This is meant literally, unlike the Yom Kippur service when the blood is thrown

4 the bull before HASHEM. ⁵ The anointed Kohen shall take from the blood of the bull and bring it to the Tent of Meeting. ⁶ The Kohen shall dip his forefinger into the blood; he shall sprinkle some of the blood seven times before HASHEM toward the Curtain of the Holy. ⁷ The Kohen shall put some of the blood on the corners of the Altar where incense is burned before HASHEM, which is in the Tent of Meeting; and all the remaining blood of the bull he shall pour onto the base of the Elevation-offering Altar, which is at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ⁸ He shall separate all the fats of the sin-offering bull from it: the fat that covers the innards and all the fat that is upon the innards; ⁹ both kidneys and the fat that is upon them, which is upon the flanks; and he shall remove the diaphragm with the liver, with the kidneys — ¹⁰ just as it would be removed from the peace-offering bull; and the Kohen shall cause them to go up in smoke on the Elevation-offering Altar. ¹¹ But the hide of the bull and all its flesh with its head and

once upward and seven times downward, for a total of eight (*Sifra*).

7. וְנָתַן . . . עַל קַרְנוֹת מִזְבֵּחַ — *Shall put . . . on the corners of the Altar.* The Kohen Gadol dips his finger into the blood and smears it in a long motion on each of the four corners of the Inner Altar (*Sifra*; see *ArtScroll Mishnah Yoma* 5:5).

יִסֹּד — *The base.* The Altar in the Courtyard was set upon a base that was one cubit high and that protruded one cubit from its walls on two full sides and from a small part of two others. The blood was poured on the western base, as indicated by the final phrase of the verse (*Sifra*).

מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה — *The Elevation-offering Altar.* Since the *tamid*, daily continual offering, was offered every day, and it was the only offering that had to be offered every day without exception, the Altar was named for it.

8. וְאֵת־כָּל־חֵלֶב — *All the fats.* The sacrificial parts are the same as those of peace-offerings, as stated in v.10; see 3:3-4.

11. וְאֵת־עוֹר הַבָּשָׂר — *But the hide of the bull.* [In the case of ordinary offerings, the animal is skinned and the hide is given to the Kohanim. All offerings like this one, whose blood is taken into the Sanctuary, are burned completely; whatever is not

יב כָּרְעִיו וְקָרְבוּ וּפָרְשׁוּ: וְהוֹצִיא אֶת-כָּל-הַפָּר
אֶל-מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה אֶל-מָקוֹם טָהוֹר אֶל-
שֹׁפַר הַדָּשָׁן וְשָׂרַף אֹתוֹ עַל-עֵצִים בְּאֵשׁ
עַל-שֹׁפַר הַדָּשָׁן יִשָּׂרַף:

יג וְאִם כָּל-עֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁגּוּ וְנִעְלָם דָּבָר
מֵעֵינֵי הַקֹּהֵל וְעָשׂוּ אֶחָת מִכָּל-מִצְוֹת יְהוָה
יִד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תַעֲשִׂינָהּ וְאֲשָׁמוּ: וְנִזְדָּעָה
הַחֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר חָטְאוּ עָלֶיהָ וְהִקְרִיבוּ הַקֹּהֵל
פָּר בֶּן-בָּקָר לַחֲטָאת וְהִבְיִאוּ אֹתוֹ לִפְנֵי

burned on the Altar is burned outside the camp, including the hide (*Zevachim* 8:2). Therefore, the animal is not flayed.]

12. אֶת-כָּל-הַפָּר — *The entire bull.* This superfluous phrase teaches that after the sacrificial parts have been removed for placement upon the Altar, the entire bull is removed to its place of burning. There it is dissected and then burned (*Sifra*).

מחוץ למחנה — *Outside of the camp.* In the Wilderness, this meant outside all three camps: the camps of the *Shechinah*, of the Levites, and of Israel. In *Eretz Yisrael*, the remains of the offering was burned outside of Jerusalem (*Rashi*).

מָקוֹם טָהוֹר — *A pure place.* But not a grave site or a place where the utensils of a *metzora* (see comm. to 14:36) have been thrown (*Rashi*).

עַל-שֹׁפַר הַדָּשָׁן — *Where the ash is poured.* See 6:4.

13-21. פָּר הָעֵלָם דָּבָר שֶׁל צִיבוּר / *The Bull for a Matter that Was Hidden from the Congregation*

Like the offering of the Kohen

Gadol, this sin-offering is a חֲטָאת פְּנִימִי, *a sin-offering whose service is inside.* And like the previous offering, it involves a case of a mistaken ruling, as follows: The Great Sanhedrin of seventy-one judges, which has its seat on the Temple Mount, issues a mistaken ruling that results in a violation by the entire nation of a negative commandment for which the penalty is *kares*. Unlike the case of the Kohen Gadol, however, whether or not the members of the Sanhedrin had sinned is immaterial. What matters is only that the *nation* had sinned — either seven of the twelve tribes, even if the sinners did not constitute a majority of all the people; or the majority of the total population, even if only a minority of the tribes was involved. If, however, the sin was committed not by the nation, but by the individual members of the Sanhedrin, this special offering would not apply; each judge who had sinned would bring the individual offering that ordinary Jews would bring in case of a similar transgression (*Rambam, Hil. Shegagos* 13:1).

4 with its feet, and its innards and its waste — ¹² the
12-14 entire bull — shall he remove to the outside of the camp,
 to a pure place, to where the ash is poured, and he shall
 burn it on wood in the fire; on the place where the ash is
 poured shall it be burned.

¹³ If Israel's entire assembly shall err, and a matter
 became obscured from the eyes of the congregation; and
 they commit one out of all the commandments of
 HASHEM that may not be done, and shall become guilty.

¹⁴ When the sin regarding which they erred becomes
 known, the congregation shall offer a young bull as a
 sin-offering, and they shall bring it to the front of the

13. כָּל־עֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל — Israel's entire
 assembly. Sifra derives herme-
 neutically that the verse refers only
 to the Great Sanhedrin. R' Bachya
 points out that it is inconceivable
 for the entire nation to violate
 the same commandment inadver-
 tently unless there had been an
 authoritative ruling permitting them
 to do so.

As to how this translation fits
 the simple meaning of the
 phrase, Radak (Shorashim) explains
 that the root of עָנָה is יָעַן, meaning
 to appoint or to assemble for a
 clearly defined purpose. Thus, it can
 refer to the entire nation or to the
 Sanhedrin, depending on the con-
 text. In a novel interpretation,
 HaK'sav V'HaKabbalah derives עָנָה
 from עֲרִי, precious ornaments. If so,
 the word is a fitting simile for the
 Sanhedrin.

מֵעֵינֵי הַקָּהָל — From the eyes of
 the congregation. As the group
 that charts the lives of the na-
 tion through the map of Halachah,

the Sanhedrin is the "eyes" of the
 people.

From the word congregation, the
 Sages derive, as noted in the
 introduction, that either a majority of
 the population or a majority of the
 tribes must have sinned. Further-
 more, the entire nation shares in the
 sin, even those individuals and tribes
 that did not commit it. Therefore,
 twelve sin-offerings must be
 brought, one for each tribe (Horayos
 4b-5a).

14. וְנִדְעָה — Becomes known. On the
 surface this statement appears to be
 too obvious to mention. Perhaps it
 alludes to the law that an offering is
 brought only if it is definite that a sin
 was committed because of the San-
 hedrin's ruling. If it is doubtful that
 the act was indeed a sin, no offering
 is brought (Ramban).

הַקָּהָל — The congregation. Funds for
 the offering must come from a spe-
 cial tax upon all individuals, so that it
 is truly communal in nature (Ho-
 rayos 3b).

טו אֶהְל מוֹעֵד: וְסָמְכוּ זִקְנֵי הָעֵדָה אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם
עַל־רֹאשׁ הַפֶּרֶךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְשָׁחַט אֶת־הַפֶּרֶךְ
טז לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְהָבִיא הַכֹּהֵן הַמַּשִּׁיחַ מִדָּם הַפֶּרֶךְ
יז אֶל־אֶהְל מוֹעֵד: וְטָבַל הַכֹּהֵן אֶצְבָּעוֹ מִן־
הַדָּם וְהָזָה שִׁבְעַת פְּעָמִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶת־פְּנֵי
יח הַפָּרֹכֶת: וּמִן־הַדָּם יִתֵּן | עַל־קֶרְנֵת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶהְל מוֹעֵד וְאֵת
כֹּל־הַדָּם יִשְׁפֹךְ אֶל־יְסוּדֵי מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה
יט אֲשֶׁר־פָּתַח אֶהְל מוֹעֵד: וְאֵת כָּל־חֵלְבוֹ
כ יָרִים מִמֶּנּוּ וְהִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וַעֲשֵׂה לְפָרֶךְ
בְּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְפָרֶךְ הַחֲטָאתָ בֶּן יַעֲשֵׂה־לוֹ
כא וּכְפָר עֲלֵהֶם הַכֹּהֵן וְנִסְלַח לָהֶם: וְהוֹצִיא
אֶת־הַפֶּרֶךְ אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וְשָׂרַף אֹתוֹ
בְּאֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף אֵת הַפֶּרֶךְ הָרִאשׁוֹן חֲטָאת
הַקֹּהֵל הוּא:
כב אֲשֶׁר נָשִׂיא יִחַטָּא וַעֲשֵׂה אֶחָת מִכָּל־מִצְוֹת

15. וְסָמְכוּ — *Shall lean*. [The only public offerings upon which leaning is done are the Yom Kippur he-goat (16:21) and this one.]

זִקְנֵי הָעֵדָה — *The elders of the assembly*. Three members of the Sanhedrin (*Sifra*; *Hil. Ma'aseh HaKorbanos* 3:10).

17. הַפָּרֹכֶת — *The Curtain*. In v. 6 it was described as the *Curtain of the Holy*. There, the holiness was undiminished even though a sin was committed by no less a personage than the Kohen Gadol. It is like a king who was betrayed by some of his highest officials; if he retains the

loyalty of his people, then his government remains intact. But if the bulk of his people desert him, his government must fall. The Curtain's holiness survives the sin of the Kohen Gadol, but it suffers from the sin of the congregation (*Rashi*; *Zevachim* 41b).

19. וְאֵת כָּל־חֵלְבוֹ — *All its fats*. Unlike the case of the Kohen Gadol's offering (v. 3-12), the Torah does not enumerate everything that goes upon the Altar. It is like a king whose friend angered him. Because the king loves his friend, he shortens the account of his humiliation (*ibid.*).

4 Tent of Meeting. ¹⁵ The elders of the assembly shall lean their hands upon the head of the bull before HASHEM, and someone shall slaughter the bull before HASHEM. ¹⁶ The anointed Kohen shall bring part of the bull's blood to the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁷ The Kohen shall dip his finger from the blood; and he shall sprinkle seven times before HASHEM, toward the Curtain. ¹⁸ He shall put some of the blood upon the corners of the Altar that is before HASHEM, which is in the Tent of Meeting; and all the remaining blood he shall pour onto the base of the Elevation-offering Altar, which is at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ¹⁹ He shall separate all its fats from it and cause it to go up in smoke on the Altar. ²⁰ He shall do to the bull as he had done to the sin-offering bull, so shall he do to it; thus shall the Kohen atone for them and it shall be forgiven them. ²¹ He shall remove the bull to the outside of the camp and burn it, as he had burned the first bull; it is a sin-offering of the congregation.

²² When a ruler sins, and commits one from among all

20. כָּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לַבֹּרֶךְ — As he had done to the . . . bull. The service is the same as that of the Kohen Gadol's bull. Thus — even though the previous verse specifies only the fat — the kidneys and the diaphragm, as well, are offered (Rashi; Sifra).

22-26. שְׂעִיר נָזִיר / He-goat of a Ruler

This sin-offering applies only to the king. Although, like the two previous ones, it deals with one of the nation's leading figures, it is different in kind. The king's sin does not in any way involve a mistaken interpretation of the law, as do those of the others, because he must be as

subservient as any commoner to the teachings of the nation's Torah authorities. His is liable to bring a sin-offering for the same sins that require any other Jew to offer one. He differs from a commoner in only one detail: The king brings a male goat, symbolic of his position of power, while other Jews bring a female goat or sheep (R' Hirsch).

22. אָשָׁר — When. The other three passages in this chapter begin with the logical *if* someone sins. Why does this discussion begin with a term that implies that the sin is inevitable: *When* it happens? Sforno suggests that people in positions of wealth

יהוה אלהיו אשר לא-תעשינה בשגגה
ב כג ואשם: או-הודע אליו חטאתו אשר חטא
בה והביא את-קרבתו שעיר עזים וזר
כד תמים: וסמך ידו על-ראש השעיר וישחט
אתו במקום אשר-ישחט את-העלה לפני
כה יהוה חטאת הוא: ולקח הכהן מדם
החטאת באצבעו ונתן על-קרנת מזבח
העלה ואת-דמו ישפך אל-יסוד מזבח
כו העלה: ואת-כל-חלבו יקטיר המזבחה
בחלב וזבח השלמים וכפר עליו הכהן
מחטאתו ונסלח לו:
וְאִם-נָפֵשׁ אֶחָת תִּחַטָּא בְּשָׁגָה מֵעַם הָאָרֶץ ששי כו

and power are indeed most likely to sin; the verse concludes *and become guilty*, because it is essential that powerful people acknowledge and feel remorse for their sin lest they sin again.

Homiletically, *Rashi* and *Sifra* find in the word *asher* an allusion to *ashrei*, fortunate. Fortunate is the generation whose leader seeks atonement even for his unintentional sins; surely he will repent his intentional sins.⁽¹⁾

נָשִׂיא — *A ruler*. The subject of this passage must be the unrivaled leader, who is not subject to anyone else's authority, whether his title is king or *nasi*. [When Israel split into the

kingdoms of Judah and Ephraim, both kings were subject to this offering.] This is inferred from the phrase below that he sinned to *his* God, which implies that only God is his superior (*Sifra*, *Horayos* 11b).

23. או-הודע — *If [the sin ...] becomes known*. If he knows with certainty that he committed the sin in question, he brings the offering described below. *Sifra* derives that if his violation is in doubt, he brings the guilt-offering described in 5:17-19.

שְׁעִיר עִזִּים — *A goat*. This goat is in its first year, according to *Rambam* (*Hil. Ma'aseh HaKorbanos* 1:14, see *Kesef Mishneh*) and *Rashi* (*Yoma*

1. Why is a generation considered fortunate if its leader sins and repents; wouldn't it be even better if he had never sinned at all? No. A leader who has never felt remorse for his deeds and learned from bitter experience that people can err and still redeem themselves, can never feel compassion for his subjects who are less than perfect. But a leader who has sinned and repented will be a more understanding, compassionate ruler (*R' Menachem David of Amshinov*).

the commandments that may not be done — unintentionally — and becomes guilty; ²³ If the sin that he committed becomes known to him, he shall bring his offering, a male, unblemished goat. ²⁴ He shall lean his hand on the head of the goat and he shall slaughter it in the place he would slaughter the elevation-offering before HASHEM; it is a sin-offering. ²⁵ The Kohen shall take with his finger from the blood of the sin-offering and place it upon the corners of the Elevation-offering Altar; and he shall pour its blood upon the base of the Elevation-offering Altar. ²⁶ And he shall cause all its fats to go up in smoke on the Altar, like the fats of the feast peace-offering; and the Kohen shall provide him atonement for his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

²⁷ If an individual person from among the people of

65b). *Se'ir izim* is a goat in the first year of its life, while a *sa'ir* is a goat in its second year. After its second year, a goat is no longer acceptable for an offering, while a bull is acceptable until the end of its third year.

25. על-קרנתו . . . באצבעו — *With his finger . . . upon the corners.* These are the two differences between the blood-service of the sin-offering and that of the elevation-offering. In the case of the elevation offering (ch. 1), the blood is thrown at the lower part of the Altar from a vessel; here, it is smeared with the Kohen's upon the four corners that are at the top of the altar. The "corners" of the Altar are four cubes, a cubit square and a cubit high that protrude above the Altar at its four corners.

יָסוֹד — *The base.* At the extreme southwestern part of the base (*Zevachim* 53a).

וַיַּכְפֹּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן — *And the Kohen shall provide him atonement.* [The atonement of all offerings is provided by the application of the blood upon the Altar. *Sifra* derives from the word *him* that the Kohen who performs a blood service must have in mind that he is doing it for the person bringing the offering.]

The Torah does not specify what is done with the meat, but since it is not burned as are the two mentioned above, it is treated like ordinary sin-offerings, which are eaten by the Kohanim (see 6:19).

27-35. חֲטָאת יָחִיד / Sin-offering of an Individual

In the type of sin for which he requires atonement and in the service of his sin-offering, an ordinary Jewish man or woman — even a non-Jewish slave — is identical to a king. The only difference is that a king brings a male goat and a regular

בְּעִשְׂתָּהּ אֶחָת מִמִּצֹּת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-
תַעֲשִׂינָהּ וְאִשָּׁם: או הוֹדַע אֵלָיו חֲטָאתוֹ כח
אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וְהֵבִיא קֶרְבָּנוֹ שְׁעִירַת עֲזִים
תְּמִימָה נִקְבָּה עַל-חֲטָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא:
וְסָמַךְ אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ הַחֲטָאת וְשָׁחַט כט
אֶת-הַחֲטָאת בַּמָּקוֹם הָעֶלְיוֹן: וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן ל
מִדְמָה בְּאֶזְבְּעוֹ וְנָתַן עַל-קֶרְנֹת מִזְבֵּחַ
הָעֹלָה וְאֶת-כָּל-דָּמָה יִשְׁפֹּךְ אֶל-יִסּוֹד לא
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְאֶת-כָּל-חֲלֵבָה יֹסִיר בְּאֲשֶׁר הוֹסֵר
חֵלֶב מֵעַל-גִּבַּח הַשְּׁלָמִים וְהַקְטִיר הַכֹּהֵן
הַמִּזְבֵּחַה לָרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיהוָה וּכְפָר עָלָיו
הַכֹּהֵן וְנִסְלַח לוֹ:

וְאִם-בֶּבֶשׂ יָבִיא קֶרְבָּנוֹ לַחֲטָאת נִקְבָּה לב
תְּמִימָה יְבִיאָנָה: וְסָמַךְ אֶת-יָדוֹ עַל רֹאשׁ לג
הַחֲטָאת וְשָׁחַט אֹתָהּ לַחֲטָאת בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר
יִשָּׁחַט אֶת-הָעֹלָה: וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּם לד
הַחֲטָאת בְּאֶזְבְּעוֹ וְנָתַן עַל-קֶרְנֹת מִזְבֵּחַ
הָעֹלָה וְאֶת-כָּל-דָּמָה יִשְׁפֹּךְ אֶל-יִסּוֹד
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְאֶת-כָּל-חֲלֵבָה יֹסִיר בְּאֲשֶׁר לה
יוֹסֵר חֵלֶב-הַבֶּשֶׂל מִזְבֵּחַ הַשְּׁלָמִים וְהַקְטִיר
הַכֹּהֵן אֹתָם הַמִּזְבֵּחַה עַל אֲשֵׁי יְהוָה וּכְפָר
עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן עַל-חֲטָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-חָטָא וְנִסְלַח לוֹ:

citizen brings a female goat or sheep.
The two animals are mentioned separately. The only difference between

the two, as specified in the laws of the peace-offering, is that the sheep's tail is offered with its fats (see 3:9).

the land shall sin unintentionally, by committing one of the commandments of HASHEM that may not be done, and he becomes guilty; ²⁸ if the sin that he committed becomes known to him, he shall bring as his offering an unblemished she-goat for the sin that he had committed. ²⁹ He shall lean his hands upon the head of the sin-offering; and he shall slaughter the sin-offering in the location of the elevation-offering. ³⁰ The Kohen shall take from its blood with his finger and place it on the corners of the Elevation-offering Altar; and he shall pour all of its remaining blood upon the base of the Altar. ³¹ He shall remove all of its fat, as the fat had been removed from upon the feast peace-offering, and the Kohen shall cause it to go up in smoke on the Altar as a satisfying aroma to HASHEM; and the Kohen shall provide him atonement, and it shall be forgiven him.

³² If he shall bring a sheep as his offering for a sin-offering, he shall bring an unblemished female. ³³ He shall lean his hands upon the head of the sin-offering; he shall slaughter it for a sin-offering in the place where he would slaughter the elevation-offering. ³⁴ The Kohen shall take from the blood of the sin-offering with his finger and place it upon the corners of the Elevation-offering Altar; and he shall pour all its blood upon the base of the Altar. ³⁵ And he shall remove all its fat as the fat of the sheep would be removed from the feast peace-offering, and the Kohen shall cause them to go up in smoke on the Altar, on the fires of HASHEM; and the Kohen shall provide him atonement for the sin that he had committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

V

14. עֹלָה וְזֶבֶח / קָרְבָּן עֹלָה וְזֶבֶח / The Variable Offering

The following passage deals with

a novel kind of זֶבֶח, sin-offering — an offering that varies according to what the sinner can afford. This

א וּנְפֹשׁ בִּי-תִחַטָּא וְשִׁמְעָה קוֹל אֱלֹהִים וְהָיָה עֹד
אוּ רָאָה אוֹ יִדַּע אִם-לֹא יִגִּיד וְנִשְׂא עֲוֹנוֹ:
ב אוּ נְפֹשׁ אֲשֶׁר תִּגְעַ בְּכָל-דִּבְרֵי טִמְאָה אוֹ
בְּנִבְלַת חַיָּה טִמְאָה אוּ בְּנִבְלַת בְּהֵמָה
טִמְאָה אוֹ בְּנִבְלַת שְׂרָץ טִמְאָה וְנִעַלְמָם מִמֶּנּוּ
ג וְהָיָה טִמְאָה וְאָשָׁם: אוֹ כִי יִגַּע בְּטִמְאֹת אֲדָם
לְכָל טִמְאָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִטְמָא בָּהֶם וְנִעַלְמָם מִמֶּנּוּ

variable aspect of the offering's value is indicated by the name given it by the Sages: קָדָן עוֹלָה וְיֹדֵד, lit. *an offering that goes up or down*. The Torah will list three specific sins for which this offering is brought; the only one of the three that incurs *kerit*, excision, if it is done intentionally, is the sin of contaminating the sanctities (vs. 2-3). Thus, had the Torah not included the other two in this passage, the violator would not have been required to bring any offering.

1. שְׁבוּעַת הָעֵדוּת / The Oath of Testimony

Whenever there is a monetary dispute between people, there is a responsibility on witnesses to come forward if they are requested by one of the parties to do so. If a witness denies that he has any knowledge of the case, the party may ask him to swear, either inside or outside of the *beis din*, that he is telling the truth. Our verse deals with a witness who has taken such an oath, and then admits that he lied. Unlike the other sins in this passage and all of the sin-offering obligations in the previous chapter, where the sin was committed inadvertently, the

witness must bring an offering only if he lied intentionally (*Shavuot* 31b).

וּנְפֹשׁ בִּי-תִחַטָּא — *If a person will sin*. This is a general introduction to the three sins that are specified in vs. 1-4.

קוֹל אֱלֹהִים — *A demand for an oath*. A party to the dispute issued a demand that a witness swear that he has no knowledge of the case. The witness refuses, whereupon the party says, *מְשַׁכְּינִי עָלֶיךָ, I advise you*. If the witness accepted the oath — either by saying *amen* or even by remaining silent and not protesting — he is liable to the offering. The word *אֱלֹהִים* implies *curse*, meaning that the oath spells out the dire consequences that will result from a false oath (see *Numbers* 5:21, *I Samuel* 14:24). *Sifra* derives that our verse applies also to an oath without a curse. Nevertheless, the very fact that our verse indicates that a curse will befall the liar shows the gravity of his sin. The Sages teach that a judge who rules correctly is regarded as God's partner in Creation. We may infer from the expression *אֱלֹהִים* that a witness who perverts justice by not testifying and swearing falsely is accused as if he had

If a person will sin: If he accepted a demand for an oath, and he is a witness — either he saw or he knew — if he does not testify he shall bear his sin. ² Or if a person will have touched any contaminated object — whether the contaminating carcass of a beast, the contaminating carcass of an animal, or the contaminating carcass of a creeping animal — but it was concealed from him, and he is contaminated and had become guilty; ³ or if he will touch a human contamination in any manner of its contamination through which he can become contaminated, but this fact was con-

tributed to the destruction of God's Creation.

וְהוּא עֵד — *And he is a witness.* He truly possesses the knowledge about which he is asked to testify, and he is not disqualified as a relative or for some other reason, but he swears to the contrary.

אוּ יָדַע — *Or he knew.* Although the witness did not see the transaction in question, he possesses knowledge that would be admissible in *beis din*. For example, although the witnesses did not see money change hands, they heard the borrower admit in front of witnesses that he owes the money (*Shevuos* 33b).

טוּמאת מקדש וקדשיו / Contamination of the Sanctuary and Its Sanctities

It is forbidden under penalty of *kares* for someone in a state of *tumah* to enter the Sanctuary or to eat food from offerings. In our passage, someone became contaminated and knew about it, but then forgot either about his contamination or that the place and food were holy. During this period of forgetfulness, he either entered the Sanctuary or ate

the food, and then realized what had happened.

בְּנֶגְלָה — *The carcass.* The various sources of the contaminations mentioned in these two verses are 11:24-43; 15-2-3; and *Numbers* 19:14-16.

וְנִסְתָּר מֵהֵם — *But it was concealed from him.* He had to have known that he had become contaminated, but then he forgot about it and committed the sin of this passage (*Shevuos* 2a).

וְהָיָה חַיָּיָה — *And had become guilty.* This term implies that someone becomes guilty merely for having touch a carcass — but cannot be so, for no one, not even a Kohen, is forbidden to touch a dead animal. Consequently, the Sages derive that this passage involves contamination of the sanctities (*Sifra* with *Malbim*).

וְהוּא יָדַע — *And then he knew.* After having sinned in his state of forgetfulness, he realized what had happened (*Rashi*). [In cases where the violator never knew that he had sinned, the sin-offerings that are part of the *mussaf* of the festivals atone for this sin.]

וְהָיָה יָדָע וְאָשָׁם: אֹךְ נֶפֶשׁ כִּי תִשָּׁבַע לְבָטָא
בְּשִׁפְתָּיִם לְהָרַע | אֹךְ לְהִיטִיב לְכָל אֲשֶׁר
יִבְטָא הָאָדָם בְּשִׁבְעָה וְנִעְלָם מִמֶּנּוּ וְהָיָה
יָדָע וְאָשָׁם לְאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה: וְהָיָה כִּי-יֵאָשֵׁם
לְאַחַת מֵאֵלֶּה וְהִתְנַדָּה אֲשֶׁר חָטָא עָלֶיהָ:
וְהֵבִיֵּא אֶת-אֲשָׁמוֹ לִיהוָה עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר
חָטָא נִקְבָּה מִן-הַצֵּאֵן כְּשֶׁבַח אֹי-שְׁעִירַת
עֲזִים לְחַטָּאת וְכִפָּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן מִחַטָּאתוֹ:
וְאִם-לֹא תִגִּיעַ יָדוֹ דֵּי שֶׁהָ וְהֵבִיֵּא אֶת-אֲשָׁמוֹ
אֲשֶׁר חָטָא שְׁתֵּי תָרִים אֹי-שְׁנֵי בְנֵי-יוֹנָה

4. שבועת בטוי / An Articulated Oath

This is the last case in the series of transgressions for which one brings a variable sin-offering: Someone swears falsely that he will or will not do something, or that something did or did not occur. In order to be liable for this offering, however, one must swear regarding an act that is permissible or possible, but if the act was prohibited by the Torah or physically impossible, the oath falls under the category of a *שבועת שוא*, *vain oath*, and one who takes such an oath, intentionally, incurs lashes. The case of a person who employs an oath to swindle someone is discussed below (5:20- 26).

לְבָטָא בְּשִׁפְתָּיִם — *Expressing with his lips*. To be valid, an oath must be articulated; a mental oath is not binding (*Rashi*; *Sifra*).

לְהָרַע אֹי לְהִיטִיב — *To do harm or to do good*. For example, he swears not to eat something (*to do harm*), or to eat it (*to do good*). The offering applies even if it involves a question of whether or not an event took place, or an innocuous act that cannot be called either good or bad. This is indicated by the next phrase, *anything that a person will express* (*Rashi*; *Sifra*).¹

הָאָדָם בְּשִׁבְעָה — *A person ... in an oath*. The Sages derive from the term *person* that at the time someone

1. The *Chozeh* of Lublin commented homiletically on our verse. There are two ways to serve God. Some people try to improve themselves through fasts and denial; others serve God through eating and pleasure, but they strive to do it all for the sake of heaven according to the laws of the Torah, thereby elevating everything they do to a level of holiness. These two ways are alluded to in our verse, which speaks of an oath *to do harm* or *to do good*, which the Sages interpret as not to eat or to eat. Which of these two paths is better? Surely it is better not to deny oneself normal pleasures. The prophet Jeremiah suggested this (4:22). *They are wise to do evil* [meaning homiletically, that they know how to deny themselves] — but they know not how to do good.

cealed from him — and then he knew — and he had become guilty. ⁴ Or if a person will swear, expressing with his lips to do harm or to do good, anything that a person will express in an oath, but it was concealed from him, and then he knew — and he became guilty regarding one of these matters.

⁵ When one shall become guilty regarding one of these matters, he shall confess what he had sinned. ⁶ He who sinned shall bring as his guilt-offering to HASHEM for his sin: a female from the flock, a sheep or a goat, for a sin-offering; and the Kohen shall provide him atonement for his sin.

⁷ But if his means are insufficient for a sheep or goat, then the one who sinned shall bring as his guilt-offering: two turtledoves or two young pigeons

swears falsely or violates his oath he must be conscious of the fact that an oath is in existence — someone who is totally unaware is regarded as lacking in *personhood* with reference to the laws of an oath (*Shevuos* 26a).

• If someone swore falsely regarding an event in the past, but he *thought* he was swearing truthfully, there is no offering. Similarly, if someone swore to do or not to do something, and had forgotten about his oath when he violated it, there is no offering. If so, how does one become liable to bring this offering? Regarding an oath about the past, an offering is required if one swore falsely regarding a past event, while unaware of the penalty for a false oath. Regarding an oath to do or not to do something in the future, one brings an offering when he remembered that he had made an oath but forgot its terms. For example, he swore *not* to eat wheat bread, but

thought that he had sworn to eat it (*Rambam*, Hil. *Shevuos* 3:6-8).

5. וְהִתְנַחֵם — He shall confess. After he brings his offering to the Courtyard (v. 6), he leans on it and confesses (*Ramban*).

6. אָשָׁמוּ — As his guilt-offering. From the fact that Scripture refers to this offering as an אָשָׁם, *guilt-offering* — a misnomer, since it is in fact a sin-offering — *Sifra* derives that some laws of a guilt-offering are derived from those of a sin-offering.

R' Hirsch comments that the offering appears to have a double nature since the Torah refers to it by both names. The word *asham* refers to the severity of the sin and its potentially damaging effect on the perpetrator. As *Ramban* (v. 15) explains, the name *asham* derives from שָׁמָה, *desolation*. The sinner has endangered his future existence by what he has done. In the case of the

ח לִיהוָה אֶחָד לַחֲטָאת וְאֶחָד לְעֹלָה: וְהָבִיִּאתָ
אֹתָם אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן וְהִקְרִיב אֶת־אֶשֶׁר לַחֲטָאת
רִאשׁוֹנָה וּמֶלֶךְ אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ מִמּוֹל עֲרֹפוֹ וְלֹא
ט יִבְדִּיל: וְהָזָה מִדָּם הַחֲטָאת עַל־קִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וְהִנָּשָׂאָר בָּדָם יִמָּצֵה אֶל־יְסוֹד הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
י חֲטָאת הוּא: וְאֶת־הַשְּׂנִי יַעֲשֶׂה עֹלָה
בְּמִשְׁפֹּט וּכְפָר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן מִחֲטָאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר־
חטא וְנִסְלַח לוֹ: וְאִם־לֹא תִשָּׂיג יָדוֹ לַשְּׂנִי
תָרִים אוֹ לַשְּׂנִי בְּגִי־יוֹנָה וְהָבִיִּאתָ אֶת־קֶרְבָּנוֹ
אֲשֶׁר חֲטָא עֲשִׂירֵת הָאֶפֶה סֵלֶת לַחֲטָאת
לֹא־יִשִּׁים עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן וְלֹא־יִתֵּן עָלֶיהָ לִבְנָה
יב כִּי חֲטָאת הוּא: וְהָבִיִּאתָ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן וְקִמַּץ
הַכֹּהֵן אֶמְמָנָה מִלֹּא קִמָּצוּ אֶת־אֹזְבָּרְתָהּ

שביעי יא

three sins in this passage, they have features that are similar to intentional sins, because all apply either to people who sinned intentionally or they require a degree of prior knowledge. The fact that the Torah provided offerings for even the poorest people is a further indication of the severity of these sins; it is as if God found it essential that all such sinners have a means of atonement. Thus, the term *asham* refers to the outward effect on the sinner, while *chata*s expresses the inner degradation for which the offering provides atonement.

8. ראשונה. — *First.* Whenever an *olah* and a *chata*s are offered in tandem, the *chata*s comes first. It is like someone who sins against his king, and sends a friend with a gift to seek forgiveness. It would be presumptu-

ous for the emissary to present the gift before appeasing the king. First he wins the pardon, then he brings in the gift. Here, too, after the *chata*s achieves forgiveness, the *olah* is brought (*Rashi*; *Zevachim* 7b).

9. והזה... על-קיר. — *He shall sprinkle ... upon the wall.* In the case of the blood service of fowl, not only are the elevation- and sin-offerings different from one another, they are opposite of the parallel offerings from animals. The fowl sin-offering has its blood sprinkled from the floor of the Courtyard upon the lower half of the Altar wall, while the blood of animal sin-offerings is placed with the Kohen's finger on the corners at the top of the Altar. The differences between animal and fowl elevation-offerings are found above, ch. 1.

5
8-12

to HASHEM, one for a sin-offering and one for an elevation-offering. ⁸ He shall bring them to the Kohen, who shall offer first the one that is for a sin-offering; he shall nip its head at its nape, but not separate it. ⁹ He shall sprinkle from the blood of the sin-offering upon the wall of the Altar, and the remainder of the blood he shall press out toward the base of the Altar; it is a sin-offering. ¹⁰ And he shall make the second one an elevation-offering as prescribed; and the Kohen shall provide him atonement for the sin that he committed, and it will be forgiven him.

¹¹ But if his means are insufficient for two turtledoves or for two young pigeons, then he shall bring, as his guilt-offering for having sinned, a tenth-ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering; he shall not place oil on it nor may he put frankincense on it, for it is a sin-offering.

¹² He shall bring it to the Kohen and the Kohen shall scoop his three fingers-full as its memorial portion

אֶל-יִסּוּד — Toward the base. The Kohen presses the bird's severed neck against the Altar wall above the base and lets the blood run down to the base. The blood is the only part of the bird sin-offering that goes to the Altar; the rest is eaten by the Kohanim (Zevachim 64b).

10. כְּמִשְׁפָּט — As prescribed. As given above, 1:14-17.

11. עֲשִׂירַת הָאֶפָה — A tenth-ephah. As noted above, this is the volume of 43.2 eggs.⁽¹⁾

12. הִזְקָאתָ הוּא — It is a sin-offering. It is unseemly to adorn an offering that comes to atone for a sin, therefore, no oil or incense are placed on it (Rashi). Chinuch adds that oil swims to the top of an offering and symbolizes greatness, which is why oil is used to anoint kings and priests. A person seeking atonement should present himself not regally, but lowly and contrite. It may also be that the Torah has pity on the poorest people and seeks to spare them the expense of oil and incense.

1. God took pity on a poor man and assigned a very inexpensive offering to him so that he could afford to obtain atonement. But if a rich man brings this offering, not only does it not atone for him, he is guilty of the sin of bringing unsanctified objects into the Temple Courtyard (Kereisos 28a). Nowadays, our charity takes the place of offerings. In the giving of charity, as in the bringing of offerings, one must give according to his economic station. A rich man has not fulfilled his obligation if he gives as little as a poor man (Chofetz Chaim).

והקטיר המזבחה על אש יהוה חטאת
יג הוא: וכפר עליו הכהן על-חטאתו אשר-
חטא מאחת מאלה ונסלח לו והיתה לכהן
יד כמנחה: וידבר יהוה אל-משה
טו לאמר: נפש ביי-תמעל מעל וחטאה
בשגגה מקדשי יהוה והביא את-אשמו
ליהוה איל תמים מן-הצאן בערפך בסף-
טו שקלים בשקל-הקדש לאשם: ואת אשר
חטא מן-הקדש ישלם ואת-חמשתו יספך

13. והיתה לכהן — *And it shall belong to the Kohen*. The remainder of the meal-offering goes to the Kohanim, who eat it according to the procedure given in 6:19 (*Rashi*).

See ch. 2 for comm. on the laws of meal-offerings.

14-26. קרבן אשם / Guilt-Offerings

On the surface, the אשם, *guilt-offering*, would seem to be virtually identical to the חטאת, *sin-offering*, since both are brought to atone for sin; however, the procedure of their service, their cost, and, perhaps especially, the implication of the two names show them to be quite different. *Ramban* comments that the word חטאת implies not a sin, but an error, as Scripture praises skilled marksmen by saying that they could shoot a stone at a hair יחטא, *and not miss* (*Judges* 20:16). Thus, one brings a sin-offering because he has missed the mark, not because he is evil. The offering is brought by someone who has sinned inadvertently, carelessly; but these are not sins of the utmost gravity. The term

אשם, however, implies the *guilt*, the desolation, of the perpetrator (see also comm. to v. 6). The sins in our passage justify this characterization. Robbery is intentional; the misappropriation of Sanctuary property, even if inadvertent, betrays general disrespect for God's sanctity. The *asham* of one who does not know whether or not he is liable to a *chatas* (see vs. 17-18) has a different sort of severity; R' Yonah (*Berachos* 2a) explains that someone who is unsure whether he sinned consoles himself with the thought that perhaps nothing happened, so it doesn't matter anyway. For other sins requiring an *asham*, see 14:13-14; 19:20-21; and *Numbers* 6:12.

As a token of the guilt-offering's relative importance, R' Akiva notes in *Sifra* that whereas there is no minimum amount that one must spend for a sin-offering, this passage assigns the minimum cost of two shekels to a guilt-offering.

15. תמעל מעל — *Commits treachery*. This term implies an unlawful change of ownership, in this case the

and cause it go up in smoke on the Altar, on the fires of HASHEM; it is a sin-offering. ¹³ The Kohen shall provide him atonement for the sin that he committed regarding any of these, and it will be forgiven him; and it shall belong to the Kohen, like the meal-offering.

¹⁴ HASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: ¹⁵ If a person commits treachery against HASHEM's holies, sinning unintentionally; he shall bring as his guilt-offering to HASHEM an unblemished ram from the flock, with a value of silver shekels, according to the shekel of the Sanctuary, for a guilt-offering — ¹⁶ for what he has deprived the Sanctuary he shall make restitution, and

unauthorized use of sacred property (Rashi).

אֵיל — A ram. In its second year (Rashi; Sifra).

שְׁקָלִים — Two shekels. The verse says merely shekels, without specifying how many, but there is a rule that whenever Scripture speaks in the plural without specifying how many, it means two, since that is the minimum of plural (Rashi; Mizrahi).

בְּשֶׁקֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ — According to the shekel of the Sanctuary. The word shekel could be used for different coins of varying weight and value, like the dollars, pounds and francs of modern times. The Torah (Exodus 30:13) specifies the weight in silver of the shekel that is to be used in the Sanctuary. Chazon Ish calculates two shekels as 38.4 grams of silver, or 1.23 troy ounces.

וְשָׁלַם — He shall make restitution. The value of the misappropriated object must be paid to the Temple treasury.

וְאֶת-חֲמִישָׁתוֹ — A fifth. The principal amount is divided into four quarters, and the transgressor adds one quarter to that amount, so that he pays five quarters to the Temple treasury: If he took an item valued at four shekels, he would pay back five. His additional payment comes to one-fifth of the total (Sifra).

17-19. אֶשֶׁם תָּלוּ / Guilt-Offering in Case of Doubt

The sin in question is one of those for which an intentional violation incurs *קְרַת*, spiritual excision, however the sinner is not sure whether or not he has committed it. For example, two pieces of fat were on his plate, and thinking that both were *שׁוֹקֵן*, permissible fat, he ate one of them. Later it developed that one of them had been *חֵלֶב*, forbidden fat — but he does not know which one he ate. Had he definitely eaten the forbidden fat he would bring a sin-offering; now that there is a reasonable doubt, he brings an *אֶשֶׁם תָּלוּ*, a guilt-offering in case of doubt. Its effect is to protect him from punish-

עָלִיו וְנָתַן אֹתוֹ לַכֹּהֵן וְהִכְהֵן יִכַּפֵּר עָלָיו
בְּאֵיל הָאֲשֵׁם וְנִסְלַח לוֹ:
וְאִם-נֶפֶשׁ כִּי תִחַטָּא וַעֲשֶׂתָהּ אַחַת מִכָּל-
מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא תַעֲשִׂינָהּ וְלֹא-יָדַע
יָי וְאִשָּׁם וְנִשְׂאָ עוֹנוֹ: וְהִבִּיא אֵיל תָּמִים
מִן-הַצֹּאֵן בְּעֶרְכָּךְ לְאִשָּׁם אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן וְכִפֹּר
עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן עַל שְׁגָגָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר-שָׁגָג וְהוּא
יט לֹא-יָדַע וְנִסְלַח לוֹ: אִשָּׁם הוּא אִשָּׁם אִשָּׁם
לִיהוָה:

כ-כא וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: נֶפֶשׁ כִּי
תִחַטָּא וּמַעַלָּה מַעַל בִּיהוָה וְכִחֵשׁ בַּעֲמִיתוֹ

ment as long as the facts remain in doubt. If, however, after bringing the *asham* he learns that he had indeed sinned, he would be required to bring a *chattas* (Rashi; *Kreisos* 26b).

16. וְנָתַן אֹתוֹ לַכֹּהֵן — *And give it to the Kohen*. He gives the ram to the Kohen (Rashba). The money, however, goes to the Temple treasury, not the Kohen.

17. וְלֹא-יָדַע — *But is unaware*. As noted above, he does not know whether or not he must bring a sin-offering.

וְנִשְׂאָ עוֹנוֹ — *And bears his iniquity*. R' Yose Hagelili said: If one who does not know whether he has sinned is punished, surely there will be punishment for one who knows he has sinned (Rashi; *Sifra*).⁽¹⁾

18. בְּעֶרְכָּךְ לְאִשָּׁם — *The proper value for a guilt-offering*. As noted above, the standard value of an *asham* is two shekels (Rashi; *Sifra*).

19. אִשָּׁם הוּא — *It is a guilt-offering*. Since he does not know if he has sinned, the bringer of the offering might feel apprehensive that he may

1. Rashi notes several inspiring homilies from *Sifra*: R' Jose says that we can see from Adam how much reward awaits those who observe the commandments. Adam had only one commandment: not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge; because of his failure, death was decreed upon untold billions of human beings. Since God's kindness is far greater than His strict justice, we cannot even imagine the rewards earned by those who obey numerous commandments, day in and day out.

R' Akiva says that a third and fourth false witness who add their testimony to that of two liars are punished even though their testimony was unnecessary; such is God's displeasure with one who joins forces with evildoers. If so, those who join forces with the righteous can surely expect great rewards.

R' Elazar ben Azariah says that a farmer is rewarded if he merely drops an ear of grain and it is picked up by a poor person, for God blesses someone who performs a *mitzvah* even without realizing it. Consequently, if someone loses money and it is found by a poor person who uses it to support himself, he will be well rewarded.

5 *add a fifth to it — and give it to the Kohen; then the*
17-21 *Kohen shall provide him atonement with the ram of the*
 guilt-offering and it shall be forgiven him.

¹⁷ *If a person will sin and will commit one of all the commandments of HASHEM that may not be done, but is unaware and became guilty, and bears his iniquity.*

¹⁸ *He shall bring an unblemished ram from the flock of the proper value for a guilt-offering to the Kohen; and the Kohen shall provide him atonement for the inadvertence that he committed unwittingly, and it shall be forgiven him.* ¹⁹ *It is a guilt-offering; he has become guilty before HASHEM.*

²⁰ *HASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: ²¹ If a person will sin and commit a treachery against HASHEM by lying to*

be bringing an improper offering. To the contrary, our verse states he is guilty and is required to seek forgiveness for his carelessness in allowing the possibility of such a sin to have occurred (*Sforno*).

20-26. אָשָׁם גִּלּוּת / Guilt-Offering for Thefts

Someone who unlawfully has his fellow Jew's money, but cannot be required to pay because the plaintiff lacks proof, and who swears falsely that he is not liable, is required to pay what he owes plus one-fifth, and to bring a guilt-offering. Lest someone think that there is no harm done in taking someone else's money so long as he intends to replace it, the Torah informs us that this is not so. In the cases given below, even after the money is returned and an extra fifth is paid to the rightful owner, the

Torah requires the transgressor to bring an offering to atone for his sin not only against man but against God (*Chinuch*).

21. בִּי הִחָטָא — *Will sin.* the verse does not add, as it does in v. 15, that he sinned inadvertently, because this offering applies equally to one who steals intentionally (*Shevuos* 36b).

מַעַל בַּה' — *Treachery against HASHEM.* He is cheating his fellow Jew — why is it called treachery against God, as in verse 15, where someone takes the property of the Sanctuary? R' Akiva says that the Torah speaks here of cases where only the two parties know of the financial obligation — only the parties and God! When someone denies that he owes the money, he denies God's sovereignty (*Rashi; Sifra*).^[1]

1. R' Levi taught that it is worse to rob a fellow human being than to steal from God. His proof is from our chapter. In the case of someone who takes the property of the Sanctuary, the Torah says first that he misappropriates — meaning that he actually used it — only then

בַּפְקֹדוֹן אוֹ-בִתְשׁוּמַת יָד אוֹ בְגֹזל אוֹ עֶשֶׂק
כב אֶת-עֲמִיתוֹ: אוֹ-מִצָּא אֲבֵדָה וְכָחַשׁ בָּהּ
וְנִשְׁבַּע עַל-שֹׁקֶר עַל-אַחַת מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר-
כג יַעֲשֶׂה הָאָדָם לְחֹטָא בְּהִנֵּה; וְהִידָּהּ כִּי-יִחְטָא
וְאִשָּׁם וְהוֹשִׁיב אֶת-הַגְּזוּלָה אֲשֶׁר גָּזַל אוֹ
אֶת-הָעֶשֶׂק אֲשֶׁר עֶשֶׂק אוֹ אֶת-הַפְקֹדוֹן אֲשֶׁר
כד מִפְטִיר הִפְקֹד אָתּוּ אוֹ אֶת-הָאֲבֵדָה אֲשֶׁר מִצָּא: אוֹ
מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׁבַּע עָלָיו לְשֹׁקֶר וְשָׁלַם אֹתוֹ
בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְחִמְשָׁתָיו יִסֹּף עָלָיו לְאֲשֶׁר הוּא לוֹ
כה יִתְּנֶנּוּ בַיּוֹם אֲשָׁמָתוֹ: וְאֵת-אֲשָׁמוֹ יָבִיא לַיהוָה
אֵיל תְּמִים מִן-הַצֹּאן בְּעֶרְכָּהּ לְאִשָּׁם אֵל-
כו הַכֹּהֵן: וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְנִסְלַח לוֹ
עַל-אַחַת מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה לְאִשְׁמָה בָּהּ:

23. *When he will sin and become guilty.* He recognized his sin and, wishing to repent, confessed his guilt and came voluntarily to bring his offering. [In *Numbers* 5:6, *Rashi* adds that he would not be liable to bring an offering if witnesses had testified to his guilt. Only one's voluntary wish to repent allows him to gain atonement through an offering.] (*Rashi*).

R' Bachya explains the apparent redundancy; *He sins* — to God; and *he becomes guilty* — to the neighbor from whom he has stolen.

גֹּזַל — *The robbed item that he robbed.* If the item that

he stole is still intact, he must return it as is, and it is forbidden for him to keep and pay for it. However, if he has changed the item significantly so that it is no longer the thing *that he robbed*, the robber may pay for it and keep the item. For example, if someone stole lumber and made a bookcase from it, he must pay for the lumber, but he may keep the bookcase, since it is not the item that he stole (*Bava Kamma* 66a, 93b).

Only after requiring him to return the stolen goods does the Torah say that he brings his guilt-offering (v. 25). God does not forgive a sinner until he first appeases the victim of

is it called a sin (v. 15). This implies that taking it without using it would not make one liable to the fine of a fifth and the guilt-offering. But in our verse, the act of taking someone else's property is called a sin; only after that does the verse speak of it as misappropriation, meaning that the very taking constitutes the sin, whether or not the thief used the property (*Bava Basra* 86b).

Maharal explains that taking from someone else is worse because there is an owner

his comrade regarding a pledge, a loan, a robbery, or by defrauding his comrade; ²² or he found a lost item and lied about it — and he swore falsely about any of all the things that a person can do and sin thereby. ²³ So it shall be that when he will sin and become guilty, he shall return the robbed item that he robbed, or the proceeds of his fraud, or the pledge that was left with him, or the lost item that he found; ²⁴ or anything about which he had sworn falsely — he shall repay its principal and add its fifth to it; he shall give it to its owner on the day he admits his guilt. ²⁵ And he shall bring his guilt-offering to HASHEM — an unblemished ram from the flock, of the proper value, as a guilt-offering — to the Kohen. ²⁶ The Kohen shall provide him atonement before HASHEM, and it shall be forgiven him; for any of all the things he might do to incur guilt.

his misdeed (*Sforno* see *Bava Kamma* 110a).

In listing the sins, the Torah speaks first of one who reneges on a pledge or a loan, and later it speaks of robbery. But in speaking of the commandment to return the property to its rightful owner, the Torah mentions the robbery before anything else. When someone thinks of taking from someone else, he is more likely to renege on pledges or loans than to commit violent robbery. Robbery, however, is very serious, because the Sages teach that the sin that is first to condemn man before God is the sin of robbery. It was robbery

that sealed the fate of Noah's generation (*Vayikra Rabbah* 33:3). That is why the first thing to be returned must be robbed and stolen property (*Sifsei Kohen*).

According to the Masoretic note appearing at the end of the *Sidrah*, there are 111 verses in the *Sidrah*, numerically corresponding to the mnemonic יְנוּאֵל [know God]. This alludes to man's striving to know his Creator and come closer to Him, a goal that is achieved by means of the offerings. Another mnemonic is צִוְּיָהּ [He commanded]. This alludes to an essential facet of the *Sidrah*, which repeats several times that offerings are רִיחַ נִיחֻיָּהּ, a satisfying aroma, because, God says, "I have commanded and My will has been done" (*Rashi*, 1:9). The *Haftarah* begins with *Isaiah* 43:21.

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who would resist and is deprived of his property. When someone takes from God, as it were, he is not really removing anything from its Owner's possession, because everything, including the thief, belongs to God. Therefore the penalties for misappropriating from the Sanctuary take effect only if the property is used. But one who steals from a human being becomes liable immediately, because the act of taking removes it from the possession of the owner.



סדר צו

Sidrah Tzav

VI

The first two chapters of *Tzav* discuss offerings that have already been mentioned in the previous chapters: *olah*, elevation-offering; *minchah*, meal-offering; *shelamim*, peace-offering; *chattas*, sin-offering; and *asham*, guilt-offering. Previously, however, the Torah addressed itself primarily to the people who bring the offerings. Now, the Torah speaks to *Aaron and his sons* (v. 2), and teaches them the additional laws that relate to their sacrificial service (*Ramban*).

176. אש המזבח ותרומת הדשן / The Altar Fire and Taking of Ashes

The first Temple service of the day was *תרומת הדשן*, *Taking of Ashes*, and shortly afterward was *שני גזרי*, *Placement of Two Logs of Wood* on the main Altar fire. There was also a general commandment to keep the Altar fires burning at all times and at least one negative commandment not to extinguish or to allow the fire to go out (see comm.).

2. צו — *Command*. [Up to now, commandments regarding the offerings were introduced with *אמרתי*, *say*, (1:2) or *דבר*, *speak* (4:2). The more emphatic term *צו*, *command*, elicits the notice of the Sages in *Sifra*.] The Sages explain that this term implies that the *Kohanim* are being urged to be especially zealous in performing this service, and that this exhortation must be repeated constantly in future generations. [This explanation of *צו* is found in *Kiddushin* 29a, as well.] Or *Hachaim* explains that this caution is particularly relevant to this passage

because it involves detailed laws that must be carried out all night.⁽¹⁾

R' Shimon adds that this exhortation is especially relevant to commandments where there is a monetary loss [such as the *עולה*, *elevation-offering*, of this chapter] (*Rashi*).

Various explanations are given for the "monetary loss" associated with the *olah* offering:

— Since an offering whose service is performed improperly must generally be repeated, whoever has to replace it will suffer a financial loss. God does not want Israel to lose money unnecessarily, hence the caution to the *Kohanim* to be careful in their performance of the service (*Chizkuni*).

— *Kohanim* are not paid for the sacrificial service. In order to perform it, they must give up their regular means of earning a livelihood. Even the hide that they receive from the elevation-offering is hardly sufficient to make up for this loss of income (*Gur Aryeh*).

1. The Torah says that God spoke to Jacob in *night visions* (*Genesis* 46:2); concerning Abraham and Isaac, the Torah never speaks of night visions, only concerning Jacob. This prophecy took place as Jacob was preparing to leave the Land of Israel to embark on his exile to Egypt — the vision was intended to show him that even in the dark night of exile, God would be with him. Thus, the Sages teach that Abraham instituted the morning prayer, Isaac

[Although neither of the above comments refer specifically to the *olah*, as noted below *Sifra* expounds that the laws of the other offerings are derived from those of the *olah*.]

— According to *Ramban*, the “monetary loss” refers not to the service of the *olah*, but to the financial burden of an offering that is mentioned later in our chapter. Every Kohen must bring a meal-offering on the first day of his Temple service, and a Kohen Gadol must bring a similar offering every single day (13-16). These offerings must be purchased from their personal funds; thus a Kohen’s participation in the Temple service represents a financial loss to him.

תורת העלה — *The law of the elevation-offering*. Most laws of the *olah* were taught in chapter 1. This passage adds that the sacrificial parts of an elevation-offering may be burned on the Altar *all night until the morning* (*Rashi*). [This applies only if all the required parts of the service were completed before evening, since an

offering becomes invalidated if any essential part of the service is not completed during the day it is brought. The burning of the sacrificial parts falls into a different category; the offering remains valid even if the parts remain unburned (*Megillah* 21a).]

The word **תורת** is regarded by the Sages as a **רביי**, an *inclusionary term*, meaning that it teaches that the law in question should be applied to other things besides the one specified in the verse. In this case, it teaches that even if an offering became invalid during the course of the service — if its parts were placed on the Altar in error, they should not be removed. They should remain on the Altar and be burned **[כָּל שִׁפְטוֹלוֹ בְּקֶדֶשׁ אִם עָלָה לֹא יִרָד]** (*Rashi*).^[1]

§ The Three Altar Fires

This passage contains three references to fire on the Altar: two are in v. 2: (a) **עַל מִזְבֵּחַ**, *on the flame*; (b) **וְהָאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ**, *the fire of the Altar*. The third is in v. 5: **וְהָאֵשׁ עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ**, *the fire on the Altar*. This teaches that

the afternoon prayer, and Jacob instituted *Maariv*, the evening prayer (*Berachos* 26b). These prayers are symbolic of the Temple offerings, and evening — when it was forbidden to perform the sacrificial service — was the time when sacrificial parts left over from the daytime could still be burned. It was Jacob’s unique role in the formation of the Jewish people to lay the foundation for exile and to demonstrate that the nation could maintain and even increase its holiness in the most adverse conditions. In order to do this, one must learn the lesson of the nighttime service: Only offerings whose service was done during the day may be burned during the night. So too, only when Jews are loyal to the teachings of our “daytime,” of the Patriarchs and teachings of our sages through the ages, can we continue our service during the nights of our history.

1. On this verse, the Midrash comments that if a person repents, it is regarded as if he had gone up to Jerusalem, rebuilt the Temple and the Altar, and brought on it all the offerings of the Torah (*Vayikra Rabbah* 7:2). Every Jew should be a human temple. If he is holy, his temple is holy; if he sins, he contaminates his personal temple. If he repents, therefore, it is as if he rebuilds himself and recreates a temple within himself (see *Overview*).

הָעֹלָה עַל מִזְבֵּחַהּ עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כָּל-הַלֵּלִילָה
ג עַד-הַבֹּקֶר וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תֻּקְדָּה בּוֹ; וְלִבֶּשׁ
הַכֹּהֵן מִדּוֹ בֹדֶם וּמִכְנָסֵי-בֹדֶם יִלְבֹּשׁ עַל-בְּשָׂרוֹ
וְהָרִים אֶת-הַדֶּשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכַל הָאֵשׁ אֶת-
הָעֹלָה עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְשָׂמוּ אֶצֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:
ד וּפָשַׁט אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וְלִבֶּשׁ בְּגָדִים אֲחֵרִים
וְהוֹצִיא אֶת-הַדֶּשֶׁן אֶל-מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה אֶל-

three fires were kept burning on the Altar. These fires were *מַעֲרֵכָה גְדוֹלָה*, the large flame, upon which the offerings were burned; *מַעֲרֵכָה שְׁנִיָּה*, the second flame for the incense, from which burning coals were taken and brought into the Sanctuary for the morning and afternoon incense service; and *מַעֲרֵכָה לְקִיּוֹם הָאֵשׁ*, the flame for the perpetuation of the fire, from which burning wood was added to the large flame whenever necessary (Rashi, v. 5; Yoma 45a).

בו תֻּקְדָּה בו — *Should be kept aflame on it.* This is a positive commandment that the Kohanim must place enough wood on the fire to keep it burning at all times, including the entire night (Ramban).

3. וְלִבֶּשׁ הַכֹּהֵן — *The Kohen shall don.* Although the verse specifies only two of the priestly garments, the Talmud (Zevachim 17b) teaches that a Kohen's service is invalid unless he wears all four of his required vestments. Therefore, as Rashi notes, these two garments are singled out because of the final two exegetical teachings (Ramban).

בו מִדּוֹ בֹדֶם — *His fitted linen tunic.* This is the long shirt that Scripture refers

to as *כְּתֹנֶת* (Exodus 28:40). The term *מִדּוֹ* is related to *מָדַד*, to *measure*, to imply that this garment must be fitted to the size of the individual Kohen (Rashi, Sifra).

עַל-בְּשָׂרוֹ — *On his flesh.* The breeches must be worn directly on the flesh, with nothing else intervening (Rashi, Sifra).

וְהָרִים אֶת-הַדֶּשֶׁן / The Taking of Ashes

The verse now states the very first service of every day: וְהָרִים אֶת הַדֶּשֶׁן, *he [the Kohen] shall pick up the ashes.* Like the *terumah* that is taken from crops and given to a Kohen, this is in the nature of a service that elevates a portion of a large mass and uses it to perform a *mitzvah*. As R' Hirsch comments, the *Terumas HaDeshen* service symbolizes a renewal of the dedication expressed by the service of the preceding day. By taking a portion from yesterday's service and placing it at the side of the Altar before beginning *today's* service, the Kohen represents the entire nation in declaring that today we will continue to serve God, as we did yesterday, according to the dictates of His will.

These ashes must come from the

6 offering: *It is the elevation-offering that stays on the flame, on the Altar, all night until the morning, and the fire of the Altar should be kept aflame on it.*³ *The Kohen shall don his fitted linen tunic, and he shall don linen breeches on his flesh; he shall pick up the ashes of what the fire consumed of the elevation-offering on the Altar, and place it next to the Altar.*⁴ *He shall remove his garments and don other garments, and he shall remove the ashes to the outside of the camp, to*

remains of sacrificial parts that had been thoroughly burned on the Altar. If any limbs or fats had not been consumed, the Kohen must put them back on the fire. To perform this service, the Kohen scoops up a shovelful from the innermost ashes on the Altar and places it on the floor of the Courtyard, east of the ramp. That these ashes must be from the burnt flesh of the offerings is derived from *אֲשֶׁר תֹאכַל*, *הָאֵשׁ אֶת הָעוֹלָה*, of what the fire consumed of the elevation-offering (Rashi; *Tamid* 1:4). This service is entirely unlike that of the next verse, which, in a sense, is utilitarian. That one involves cleaning excess ashes from the Altar, and it is done only when so much ash accumulates that the Altar must be cleaned (see below).

4. וְפָשַׁט — *He shall remove.* Unlike the service mentioned in the previous verse, which requires only a small shovelful, this service involves the removal of a large quantity of ashes

[see below]. The Kohen must wear priestly garments when doing so, but since he will be moving a great deal of ash, he would be very likely to soil his sacred garments. Therefore, before taking away the ashes, the Kohen should *remove his garments* and change to older, more worn priestly garments. By speaking of this change of clothing, the Torah teaches us common courtesy: As the Sages put it, it is unseemly for someone to wear the same clothing in the kitchen that he would use to pour wine for his master (Rashi, *Sifra*).^[1]

וְהוֹצִיא אֶת הָאֵשׁ — *And he shall remove the ashes.* These ashes came from the pile [תַּפְחִי] at the center of the Altar. Throughout the day and night, ashes would be cleared from the fire and placed on this pile. Whenever the pile grew to a point where it spilled over to the wood on which the offerings were consumed, the ashes would be removed from the Altar (Rashi).

1. Just as the Kohen put on worn garments to remove the ashes, so he would don his better vestments when he went to the sacrificial service. From this we learn the importance of changing into our best clothing in honor of the Sabbath, after having worn something else while performing the menial chores in preparation for the holy day. (This applies especially to the women, who do not attend the synagogue on Friday evening (*Maharsha Shabbos* 114a).)

ה מקום טהור: והאש על-המזבח תוקד-בו
לא תכבה ובער עליה הכהן עצים בבקר
בבקר וערב עליה העלה והקטיר עליה
ו חלבי השלמים: אש תמיד תוקד על-
ו המזבח לא תכבה: וזאת
תורת המנחה הקרב אתה בני-אהרן
ח לפני יהוה אל-פני המזבח: והרים ממנו
בקמצו מסלת המנחה ומשמנה ואת כל-
הלבנה אשר על-המנחה והקטיר המזבח

5. *Wood... every morning*. Every morning and afternoon, the Kohanim were to add two wooden logs to the large pyre. In the morning it was done by the Kohen who performed the *Terumas HaDeshen* service; in the afternoon, the logs were added in conjunction with the תמיד, continual daily offering (Yoma 27b).

ה העלה — *The elevation-offering*. The definite article ה, *the*, indicates that the verse refers to a particular elevation-offering: the תמיד, *the continual daily offering* (Malbim). By saying that the *tamid* should be placed directly on the fire, this phrase implies that it should be the first offering to be placed upon the fire every day; afterwards *the fats of the peace-offering*, meaning the other offerings of the day, may be offered. The Sages take the word השלמים in the sense of השלם, *to complete*. This teaches that the day's sacrificial service may be commenced only after the continual offering has been brought (Rashi).

Abarbanel adds that the Torah says explicitly only that peace-offerings should be offered because it is preferable not to speak of offerings that come to atone for sins. Better that such offerings not be necessary and that people bring offerings only in gratitude for their good fortune.

6. לא תכבה — *Not to be extinguished*. Even if all the coals on the pyre are aflame when the Kohen comes in the morning to remove ashes (v. 2), it is forbidden to extinguish any part of the fire (*Zevachim* 91b).

The Midrash observes that the Altar of Moses was used for about 116 years — 39 years in the Wilderness, 14 in Gilgal, 13 in Nob, and 50 in Gibeon (*Rashash*). During all those years, the fire on the Altar burned continuously, yet its thin copper layer never melted and its wooden structure was never charred (*Yayikra Rabbah* 7:5).

Rashi notes that both this verse and verse 5 contain this identical

a pure place. ⁵ The fire on the Altar shall be kept burning on it, not to be extinguished; and the Kohen shall kindle wood upon it every morning. He shall prepare the elevation-offering on it and shall cause the fats of the peace-offerings to go up in smoke on it. ⁶ A permanent fire shall remain aflame on the Altar; not to be extinguished.

⁷ This is the law of the meal-offering: the sons of Aaron shall bring it before HASHEM, to the front of the Altar. ⁸ One shall separate his three fingers-full from it, from the fine flour of the meal-offering and from its oil, and all of the frankincense that is on the meal-offering; and he shall cause them to go up in smoke on the Altar

phrase; consequently he comments that someone who extinguishes part of the fire is in violation of two negative commandments [and would be subject to two sets of lashes]. Ramban disagrees. According to him, verse 5 refers to all Jews and makes them subject to lashes for extinguishing even a single coal. Verse 6 refers only to Kohanim and makes them responsible to keep enough fuel on the Altar so that the fire will never go out. If they fail to do so they are in violation of both a positive and a negative commandment, but there cannot be a penalty of lashes because there is no physical act involved in passively allowing the fire to go out.

7-11. מִנְחָה / The Meal-Offering

Though the meal-offering has been discussed above in chapter 2, this passage adds several new laws.

7. תורת המנחה — *The law of the meal-offering.* As noted in the com-

mentary to verse 2, the word תורת signifies an amplification, meaning that the law in question applies to other subjects as well. Here it teaches that the oil and frankincense mentioned in verse 8 (with regard to Israelite offerings) must be included also in the meal-offerings of Kohanim (vs. 12-16) [even though the service of priestly offerings differs from those of Israelites (v. 16)] (*Rashi*).

הֵקֵרֵב אֹתָהּ — *Shall bring it.* The Kohen takes the sacred vessel containing the meal-offering and touches it to the southwestern corner of the Altar (*Sotah* 14b). Our verse speaks of לִפְנֵי ה', before HASHEM, and of פְּנֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, the front of the Altar; these are two different places. Before HASHEM indicates the western part of the Courtyard, since the Tabernacle was west of the Altar; and front of the Altar is the south, since the ramp leading up to the top of the Altar was at its south (*Rashi*).

ט רִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ לַיהוָה: וְהִנֹּחֲתָתָהּ מִמֶּנָּה
יֵאָכְלוּ אֶהָרֹן וּבָנָיו מִצֹּת תֹּאכֹל בְּמָקוֹם
י קָדֹשׁ בַּחֲצֵר אֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד יֵאָכְלוּ: לֹא
תֹאפֶה חֶמֶץ חֲלָקִים נָתַתִּי אֹתָהּ מֵאִשִּׁי קֹדֶשׁ
יא קֹדָשִׁים הֵוא בַּחֲטָאֵת וְכַאֲשֵׁם: כָּל-זָכָר בְּבָנֵי
אֶהָרֹן יֵאָכְלֶנָה חֶק-עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם מֵאִשִּׁי
יְהוָה כָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִגַּע בָּהֶם יִקְדָּשׁ:

וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: זֶה קֶרְבֶּן
שני יב-יג אֶהָרֹן וּבָנָיו אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרִיבוּ לַיהוָה בְּיוֹם
הַמִּשָּׁח אֹתוֹ עֲשִׂיתָ הָאֹפָה סֶלֶת מִנְחָה
תָּמִיד מִחֲצִיתָהּ בַּבֶּקֶר וּמִחֲצִיתָהּ בָּעֶרֶב:

8. אֶזְכְּרָתָהּ — *Its memorial portion.* The handful and the frankincense that are burned on the Altar will be a source of merit, so that God will recall the owner of the offering for good and as a source of satisfaction before Him (*Rashi* to 2:2).

9. וְהִנֹּחֲתָתָהּ — *What is left.* The *מִנְחָה*, meal-offering, has the status of offerings that are most holy (v. 10). As such it may not leave the Tabernacle Courtyard and it may be eaten only by male Kohanim, like *חֲטָאוֹת* וְאֲשָׁמוֹת, *guilt- and-sin offerings*, which share this status (v. 10).

10. לֹא תֹאפֶה חֶמֶץ — *It may not be baked leavened.* Both the part placed upon the Altar and the remainder that is cooked or baked to be eaten by Kohanim must be kept in an unleavened state (*Rashi*). *Abarbanel* explains that the reason for this prohibition is provided by the next phrase of our verse: *I have presented*

it as their share from My fire-offerings. The Torah makes it clear that a Kohen who eats is like the Altar that provides atonement when offerings go up in smoke. Therefore, when Kohanim eat their part of the meal-offering, they should maintain the restrictions of the Altar itself.

[The Sages teach that the Kohanim eat and the owners obtain atonement (*Pesachim* 58b); when a person's offering is instrumental in providing sustenance to those who devote their lives to God's service, his own spiritual level is elevated. This, too, demonstrates the comparability between the Altar and the altar-table of the righteous.]

11. כָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִגַּע בָּהֶם יִקְדָּשׁ — *What-ever touches them shall become holy.* [This law is based on the familiar principle that food or vessels can absorb taste particles. Thus, for example, it is forbidden to cook meat in a dairy pot, and a pareve food

6 for a satisfying aroma — its memorial portion before
9-13 HASHEM.⁹ Aaron and his sons shall eat what is left of it; it shall be eaten unleavened in a holy place, in the Courtyard of the Tent of Meeting shall they eat it.¹⁰ It may not be baked leavened, I have presented it as their share from My fire-offerings; it is most holy, like the sin-offering and like the guilt-offering.¹¹ Every male of the children of Aaron may eat it, it is an eternal portion for your generations, from the fire-offerings of HASHEM; whatever touches them shall become holy.

¹² HASHEM spoke to Moses saying: ¹³ This is the offering of Aaron and his sons, which each shall offer to HASHEM on the day he is inaugurated: a tenth-ephah of fine flour as a continual meal-offering; half of it in the morning and half of it in the afternoon.

cooked in the pot is generally treated as if it were dairy food, since it absorbs the dairy taste.) If a food or vessel touches the meal-offering in such a way that it can absorb its taste, the food or vessel must be treated according to the halachic stringency of the meal-offering, i.e., the food would have to be eaten within the time period and only in the place where a meal-offering must be eaten (*Rashi*).

12-16. מִנְחַת כֹּהֵן / The Priestly Meal-Offering

There are two meal-offerings that are offered only by Kohanim. The first is offered the first time a Kohen performs the Temple service, and when a Kohen Gadol assumes his

new office. The second special priestly offering is brought every day by the Kohen Gadol. The "first-day" offering is often called מִנְחַת הַיּוֹם, induction meal-offering, while that of the Kohen Gadol is called מִנְחַת חֻבִּיתִין, a pan meal-offering. It was so named after the מַחֲבֵת, the flat pan in which it was baked.

13. עֲשִׂירַת הָאֵפָה — A tenth-ephah. The flour was baked into twelve unleavened loaves (*Menachos* 76a).

תָּמִיד — Continual. This adjective applies only to the Kohen Gadol's offering. His is brought every day, and is described as continual, but other Kohanim bring their offerings only once, on the first day of their service (*Rashi*).¹¹

1. The Kohen Gadol offered his inauguration offering continually, because he had to grow constantly; great people do not have the easy luxury of remaining static. The Kohen Gadol is likened to the heavenly angels (*Malachi* 2:7), and just as angels renew themselves daily (*Chagigah* 14b), so the Kohen Gadol must feel as if each day is a fresh beginning for his service.

י' עַל-מִחְבֹּת בַּשֶּׁמֶן תַּעֲשֶׂה מִרְבַּכַּת תְּבִיאָנָה
 תְּפִינִי מִנְחַת פָּתִים תִּקְרִיב רֵיח־נִיחֹחַ
 טו לַיהוָה: וְהִכֹּהֵן הַמָּשִׁיחַ תַּחֲתֵיו מִבְּגָיו יַעֲשֶׂה
 טז אֹתָהּ חֶק-עוֹלָם לַיהוָה כָּלִיל תִּקְטֹר: וְכָל-
 מִנְחַת כֹּהֵן כָּלִיל תִּהְיֶה לֹא תֹאכַל:
 יז וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל-
 אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר זֹאת תּוֹרַת הַחֻטָּאת
 בְּמָקוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁחֹט הָעֹלָה תִשְׁחֹט
 הַחֻטָּאת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה קֹדֶשׁ קֹדָשִׁים הוּא:
 יט הִכֹּהֵן הַמִּחֻטָּאת אֹתָהּ יֹאכְלֶנָה בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ

14. מִרְבַּכַּת ... תְּפִינִי — *Scalded ... repeatedly baked*. The offering was scalded in boiling water, baked in an oven, and fried on the pan (*Rashi*). *Korban Aharon* explains that the three processes — scalding, baking, and frying — are collectively described as *repeatedly baked*. *Rashi* to *Menachos* 50b adds that it was baked again after the frying.

15. וְהִכֹּהֵן הַמָּשִׁיחַ — *The Kohen ... who is anointed*. This verse refers only to a Kohen Gadol, who assumes office as the successor of Aaron. Only a Kohen Gadol is anointed; ordinary Kohanim merely begin performing the service once they come of age. Verse 13 taught that every Kohen brings this meal-offering on his first day of service, and a Kohen Gadol brings it again on the day he is elevated to his new position. This verse teaches that once a descendant of Aaron becomes Kohen Gadol, he brings this offering every day of his tenure. Thus, on his first day in office, the new Kohen Gadol would bring this offering twice: once to

inaugurate his new position and again as his daily Kohen Gadol offering (*Menachos* 78a).

Although it was a *mitzvah* to anoint the Kohen Gadol, he could assume the duties of his office simply by donning his vestments and performing the service. This was the practice in the era of the Second Temple, when *הַשֶּׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה*, the oil of anointment, was not available to the Jewish people (*Sifra*).

כָּלִיל תִּקְטֹר — *It shall be caused to go up in smoke in its entirety*. Unlike the other meal-offerings, from which only the handful that goes upon the Altar is burned (2:2), all meal-offerings of Kohanim are burned completely. Verses 13 and 15 state this law regarding the required offerings of the Kohen Gadol and ordinary Kohanim; the next verse extends it to ordinary meal-offerings brought by Kohanim, whether they are voluntary or for sins (*Rashi*).

17-23. חֻטָּאת / Sin Offering.

The various kinds of sin-offerings

6 ¹⁴ It should be made on a pan with oil, scalded shall you
14-19 bring it; a repeatedly baked meal-offering, broken into
pieces shall you offer it, as a satisfying aroma to
HASHEM. ¹⁵ The Kohen from among his sons who is
anointed in his place shall perform it; it is an eternal
decree for HASHEM; it shall be caused to go up in smoke
in its entirety. ¹⁶ Every meal-offering of a Kohen is to be
entirely burned; it may not be eaten.

¹⁷ HASHEM spoke to Moses saying: ¹⁸ Speak to Aaron
and his sons saying, This is the law of the sin-offering;
in the place where the elevation-offering is slaughtered,
shall the sin-offering be slaughtered, before HASHEM —
it is most holy. ¹⁹ A Kohen who may perform its sin-
offering service may eat it; it shall be eaten in a holy

have been listed in chapter 4. This passage adds to the laws given there.

18. בְּקֹדֶשׁ — *In the place.* The עֹלָה, elevation-offering, and therefore, the חֹטֵאת, sin-offering as well, is slaughtered to the north of the Altar. Exactly which part of the northern Courtyard, however, is the subject of a Talmudic dispute (see Yoma 36a ArtScroll Mishnah Yoma 3:8). By describing the sin-offering as *most holy* — like the elevation-offering — the verse means to explain why both must be slaughtered in the same place.^[1]

19. אִתּוֹ אֲתָה — *Who may perform* [lit. *who performs*] its sin-offering service. As interpreted by

Zevachim 99a, the term אֲתָה, *who may perform*, is not meant literally. Instead, the meat of the offering is apportioned among all the Kohanim who are eligible to perform its service, whether or not they actually did so. This is indicated by v. 22, which states clearly that *all* the male Kohanim may eat the meat (*Rashi*). If a Kohen was *tamei* [impure] when the offering was brought, he was unfit to participate in the service and therefore, would not receive a share. Similarly, he would not receive a share if he was required to bring an offering to complete his purification service, or if he had lost a close relative that day. But he would be permitted to eat the flesh after puri-

1. The Torah tells us that the sin-offering must be slaughtered in the same place as the elevation-offering. In choosing this roundabout way of telling us the location of its slaughter, the Torah is giving us an insight into the underlying cause of the sin. The elevation-offering is slaughtered in the חֹפֶן, northern part of the Courtyard; the word can also be read as חָפֶץ, *hidden*, because an elevation-offering is frequently brought to atone for hidden thoughts of the heart. Although sin-offerings come for unintentional sins, not for thoughts, the Torah compares it to the elevation-offering, because people do not become "careless" in a vacuum. If someone sins "by mistake," we may be certain that his act was preceded by sinful thoughts and desires (*Avnei Nezer*).

כ תֹאכַל בַּחֲצֵר אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: כָּל אֲשֶׁר-יִגַע
בְּבִשְׂרָה יִקְדָּשׁ וְאֲשֶׁר יִזָּה מִדָּמָה עַל-הַבֶּגֶד
כא אֲשֶׁר יִזָּה עָלֶיהָ תִכָּבֵּס בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ: וּבְלִי-
חֶרֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תִּבְשַׁל-בּוֹ יִשְׁבֵּר וְאִם-בְּכֵלִי
בב נִחֲשֶׁת בִּשְׂלָה וּמֶרְק וְשֵׁטֶף בְּמַיִם: כָּל-זֶכֶר
כג בְּבִהֲנִים יֵאָכֵל אֹתָהּ קֹדֶשׁ קֹדָשִׁים הִוא: וְכָל-
חֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר יִזְבֹּא מִדָּמָה אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
לִכְפֹּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ לֹא תֹאכַל בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרֹף:

fying himself, if other Kohanim offered him part of their portions (Zevachim 99a).

20. אֲשֶׁר-יִגַע — Whatever touches. As in verse 11 above, this "touching" involves an absorption of the sin-offering's taste particles (Rashi).

אֲשֶׁר יִזָּה עָלֶיהָ — Whatever it has been sprinkled upon. Only the area touched by the blood, not the entire garment, must be washed (Rashi).

בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ — In a holy place. This phrase teaches that if a garment or a vessel has absorbed taste or blood of a *חטאת*, sin-offering, the absorbed substance retains its status. Consequently, like the sin-offering itself, the garment may not be removed from the Courtyard. Furthermore, even the washing of the garment and the steps specified in the following verse must be done in the Courtyard (Ramban).

21. הַקְשֵׁרָה / Kashering

This verse contains two principles of the general rules of *הַקְשֵׁרָה*, the *kashering* [i.e., purging] of vessels. The general rule is that a vessel can absorb taste particles of food. If

the food is non-kosher or, as in the case of our chapter, its general use is prohibited because it is holy, the vessel too becomes forbidden. If, however, the forbidden particles can be removed from the walls of the vessel, its use would be permitted. As our verse indicates, it is impossible to purge the taste particles from earthenware; consequently there is no way to make its use permissible. On the other hand, metal vessels can be purged of their taste, under the procedures given in *Orach Chaim* §451; therefore they can be made permissible again.

וְיִשְׁבֵּר — Must be broken. Given the fact that the taste particles of the sin-offering remain forever embedded in earthenware, the taste becomes *נותר*, *leftover*, and hence forbidden, after the passage of a day and a night — as does the flesh of the sin-offering. Just as the leftover meat must be burned, so, too, the taste within an earthenware vessel must be "destroyed" through breaking. This rule applies to all offerings, as well as the sin-offering of our verse (Rashi). The broken shards of these

place: in the Courtyard of the Tent of Meeting.

²⁰ Whatever touches its flesh becomes holy; and if its blood is sprinkled upon a garment, whatever it has been sprinkled upon, you shall wash in a holy place. ²¹ An earthenware vessel in which it was cooked must be broken; but if it was cooked in a copper vessel, it should be purged and rinsed in water. ²² Every male among the Kohanim may eat it; it is most holy. ²³ Any sin-offering from which some blood has been brought to the Tent of Meeting to effect atonement within the Holy — it may not be eaten; it must be burned in fire.

earthenware vessels were miraculously absorbed into the floor of the Courtyard (Zevachim 96a).

ומרק — It [i.e., the vessel] should be purged. The root is מרק, emptied, since the kashering process empties the vessel of taste particles (Ha-K'sav V'HaKabbalah). According to Rashi, boiling water must be cooked in the vessel. Rambam (Hil. Ma'aseh HaKorbanos 8:12) disagrees. He holds that, unlike the regular kashering process, it is necessary only to wash the vessel thoroughly in hot water.

ושטף — And rinsed. The purging through heat brings the taste particles out of the walls of the vessel to the surface, from which they are rinsed off with water. If hot water were used, it would only open up the pores of the vessel and allow the forbidden taste to go back into its walls.

23. וְכֹל-חֲטָאָה — Any sin-offering. The word וְכֹל, any, is an inclusive word, which comes to teach that all offerings — not only sin-offerings — are included in the law of this verse (Rashi).

אֲשֶׁר יוּבָא ... לְכַפֵּר — Has been brought ... to effect atonement. It is the blood service of any offering that provides atonement, and with very few exceptions, this blood service is performed on the Altar in the Courtyard. Our verse teaches that if the Kohen erred and took blood into the Sanctuary with the intention of effecting atonement there, the entire offering becomes invalid and must be burned. [In the case of offerings whose service requires that their blood be offered inside the Sanctuary (4:5,16; 16:14,15), the offering does not become invalid, of course, but the Torah specifies that the entire offering must be burned outside the camp] (Ramban).^[1]

1. All offerings whose service requires that the blood be brought into the Sanctuary must be burned, while the meat of other sin-offerings is eaten by the Kohanim. In the case of ordinary unintentional sins, the sin remains an external aberration; at heart, a Jew remains essentially good. Because he sinned only with his body but not with his mind, the servants of God eat the external flesh of the offering in a holy place, as part of his atonement. But in the case of the

א וְזֹאת תִּזְכֹּר הָאֵשֶׁת קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים הִוא:
ב בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחָטוּ אֶת-הַעֲלֶה יִשְׁחָטוּ
אֶת-הָאֵשֶׁת וְאֶת-דָּמָהּ יִזְרֹק עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
ג סָבִיב: וְאֶת-כָּל-חֲלָבוֹ יִקְרִיב מִמֶּנּוּ אֶת
הָאֵלֶּה וְאֶת-הַחֶלֶב הַמִּכְסָּה אֶת-הַקֶּרֶב:
ד וְאֵת שְׁתֵּי הַכְּלִיֹּת וְאֶת-הַחֶלֶב אֲשֶׁר עֲלֵיהֶן
אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַכִּסְלִים וְאֶת-הַיִּתְרָת עַל-הַכֶּבֶד
ה עַל-הַכְּלִיֹּת יִסִּירֶנָּה: וְהַקֵּטִיר אֹתָם הַכֹּהֵן
ו הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה אֵשֶׁת אֵשֶׁת הִוא: כָּל-
זָכָר בַּבְּהֵמִים יֹאכְלֶנּוּ בַּמָּקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ יֹאכֹל
ח קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים הִוא: בְּחֻטָּאת בְּאֵשֶׁת תֹּזְרֶה
ט אֶחָת לָהֶם הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יִכְפֹּר-בּוֹ לוֹ יִהְיֶה:

VII

17-1 / קָדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים / Guilt-Offering.

The main body of laws regarding the guilt-offering appeared above (5:14-26). This passage provides several additional laws.

1. קָדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים — *Most holy*. There are two categories of offerings: *most holy* and קְדָשִׁים קְלִים, offerings of lesser holiness. Guilt-offerings, sin-offerings, elevation-offerings, meal-offerings, and communal peace-offerings [וּבְחֵי שְׁלָמִי עֶבֶר] are known

as *most holy offerings* because they have stricter laws than individual peace- and thanksgiving- offerings, which are known as offerings of lesser holiness. Among the stricter laws of the most holy offerings are that they may be eaten only in the Temple Courtyard by male Kohanim, and they may not be removed from the Courtyard.^[1]

הוא — *It*. This word is usually taken as a limitation, meaning that the law

offerings of the Sanhedrin and the Kohen Gadol, the sin came about through an erroneous ruling (4:3, 13); and the Yom Kippur offering, which was brought into the Temple, atoned for intentional sins. Those offerings involve the minds of the sinners that became perverted. Such sins must be rooted out, as symbolized by burning the entire offering (*Meshech Chochmah*).

1. R' Yehoshua of Kutna gave a humorous homiletical comment on the saying of the Sages: Even wicked Jews are as filled with commandments as a pomegranate is filled with seeds (*Berachos* 57a). Good people are never satisfied with themselves; they realize that there is always more that can be accomplished and more that should be done. But wicked people are usually smug; they are convinced that they are full of mitzvos. Our verse conveys a similar message in a homiletical reading: This is the law of the guilty one — he thinks that he is a holy of holies!

This is the teaching of the guilt-offering; it is most holy. ² In the place where they shall slaughter the elevation-offering shall they slaughter the guilt-offering; and he shall throw its blood upon the Altar all around. ³ And he shall offer all of its fat; the tail and the fat that covers the innards; ⁴ and both kidneys and the fat that covers them, which is on the flanks; and he shall remove the diaphragm as well as the liver, as well as the kidneys. ⁵ The Kohen shall cause them to go up in smoke on the Altar, as a fire-offering to HASHEM; it is a guilt-offering.

⁶ Every male among the Kohanim may eat it; it must be eaten in a holy place, it is most holy. ⁷ Like the sin-offering is the guilt-offering, they have the same law; it shall belong to a Kohen who may perform its atonement

in question applies only to it. In this case, the word it stresses that only the *asham* itself may be offered, but not a תַּמְנוּחָה, *substitute* [see 27:10. There, the Torah forbids someone to assign a different animal as a substitute for his offering, but if he goes ahead and does so, both animals must be offered. In the case of offerings that are offered specifically to atone for a sin — whether an *asham* or a *chatas* — a substitute may not be offered.] (Rashi, Sifra).

2. יִשְׁחָטוּ — They shall slaughter. In contrast to the rest of the passage, which is in the singular, this verb is plural, to teach that the slaughter may be performed by many categories of people, such as women, converts, and gentile slaves of Jews (Sifra).

According to our texts of Rashi, the plural teaches that these laws apply to an *asham* that is offered on behalf of the

entire nation [אֶשֶׁם צִבּוֹר], but this contradicts *Temurah* 14a, which states clearly that there is never a communal *asham*. In addition, the text is not found in old editions of Rashi, and none of the classic commentaries on Rashi discuss it. Consequently, the commentators agree that the text in our editions is a later, erroneous addition.

3. כָּל-חֵלְבוֹ — All of its fat. The parts that go on the Altar are given here since they were not listed in ch. 5. Among the parts is the tail, because an *asham*, unlike other offerings, can be brought only from sheep (5:16,18); and a sheep is the only animal whose tail is one of the sacrificial parts [see 3:9] (Rashi).

7. תּוֹרָה אֶחָד לָהֶם — They have the same law. The sin- and guilt-offerings both share the law that is now given in the verse.

וְאִשֶּׁר יִכְפֹּר-בּוֹ — Who may perform its atonement service. Kohanim whose

ח וְהִכְהֵן הַמִּקְרִיב אֶת-עֹלַת אִישׁ עֹזֵר הָעֹלָה
ט אֲשֶׁר הִקְרִיב לִפְהֶן לוֹ יְהִיָּה: וְכָל-מִנְחָה
אֲשֶׁר תִּאָּפֶה בַּתְּנוֹר וְכָל-נִעְשָׂה בַּמִּרְחָשֶׁת
וְעַל-מִחְבַּת לִפְהֶן הַמִּקְרִיב אֹתָהּ לוֹ תִּהְיֶה:
י וְכָל-מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה-בַּשֶּׁמֶן וְחִרְבָּה לְכָל-בְּנֵי
אֹהֲרֵן תִּהְיֶה אִישׁ בְּאַחִיו:

אֹב, *family group*, is on duty that day share in the division of the flesh, provided they were eligible to perform the service. This excludes those Kohanim who had not been permitted to participate in the service because they would not become *tahor* until evening, who must bring a personal offering to complete their purification process, and those who lost a close relative that same day (*Rashi, Sifra*; see 6:19).

8-10. Miscellaneous Gifts to the Kohen

Verse 7 provided that all eligible Kohanim share in the division of a guilt-offering. These three verses extend that rule to other offerings, parts of which are given to Kohanim; in those cases, too, only eligible Kohanim share in the parts.

8. עֹלַת אִישׁ — *A person's elevation-offering*. This term is taken by the Sages to stress possession: The offering must belong to a person, meaning that its owner receives credit for having brought it. However, if the offering became disqualified so that its sacrificial parts may not be placed upon the Altar, the Kohanim do not share in its hide. In the words of the Mishnah: כָּל שֶׁלֹא נָזַח הַמִּזְבֵּחַ בְּבִשְׂרָה: לֹא נָזְכוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים בְּעֹזָרָה, *Whenever the Altar does not acquire the right to the*

meat, the Kohanim do not acquire the right to the hide (Zevachim 103a).

עֹזֵר הָעֹלָה — *The hide of the elevation-offering*. The animal had to be skinned before the offering was placed on the Altar (1:6); this hide goes to the Kohanim.

9-10. וְכָל-מִנְחָה — *Any meal-offering*. *Ramban* notes that verse 9, which itemizes the baked offerings, says that they belong to the Kohen who performed the service. Verse 10, which speaks of raw flour offerings, says that they are divided among all the Kohanim. The reason for this would seem to be that the Kohen who had the extra trouble of baking and preparing an offering should be rewarded for his work. This is the simple meaning of the verses. The halachah, however, based on Scriptural exegesis, is that all eligible Kohanim who are on duty share equally in all the offerings.

Malbim explains why the verses seem to speak of two different kinds of divisions. When the Tabernacle was erected, Aaron and his sons were on duty at all times, and they shared in all the offerings. In later generations, however, when the numbers of Kohanim grew and they were divided into shifts who would be on duty for a week at a time, only those

7 service. ⁸ And the Kohen who may offer a person's
8-10 elevation-offering — the hide of the elevation-offering
that he offered shall belong to that Kohen, it shall be his.

⁹ Any meal-offering that is baked in the oven and any
that is made in a deep pan or upon a shallow pan; it
shall belong to the Kohen who may offer it — it shall be
his. ¹⁰ And any meal-offering that is mixed with oil or
that is dry, it shall belong to all of Aaron's sons, every
man alike.

who were assigned to the service had
a share in a day's offerings. Conse-
quently, these two verses allude to the
varying procedures in allotting the
priestly duties.

The Torah lists each kind of meal-
offering to teach that all share the
following restriction: It is forbidden
for one Kohen to tell another, "You
take my share of this offering, and I
will take your share of the next one.
In that way, each of us will have
larger, more convenient pieces." All
the baked meal-offerings are listed in
verse 9, and all those that are raw are
listed separately, in verse 10, because
we might have argued as follows: It is
reasonable to forbid such trades in the
case of small pieces of baked offer-
ings since they are ready to eat as is
and it is no hardship on a Kohen to
take many small pieces. In the case of
raw flour, it would be a great conve-
nience to the Kohen to forgo many
small portions in favor of a few large
ones. Therefore, the Torah lists both
categories in separate verses to teach
that all forms of trades are forbidden

(Rambam, Hil. Maaseh HaKorbanos
10:15).

Such trades are forbidden because
the meat is not the property of the
Kohen, but of God (Kiddushin 53b).
Also, the owner's atonement results
partly from the fact that the servants
of God eat the meat. Who can know
which Kohen's eating would be a
greater source of merit to the owner?
Therefore, it is important that all the
Kohanim share every offering
(Midrash HaGadol).

וְהָיָה — Or that is dry. A sinner's
meal-offering does not contain oil
[5:11, Numbers 5:15] (Rashi). ^[1]

11-17. קָרְבַּן תּוֹדָה / Thanksgiving Offering

When someone has been in a
life-threatening crisis and survived,
he brings a thanksgiving-offering to
express his gratitude to God — and
his recognition that it was God Who
saved him. From Psalm 107, David's
hymn of gratitude, the Sages (*Bera-
chos* 54b) derive the four categories of
people who are required to bring the

1. Homiletically, the verse can be understood as follows: Whether the one who brings a meal-offering has not sinned and is therefore entitled to put oil into his offering, or whether he is a sinner who must bring a dry offering — as far as the sons of Aaron are concerned, *אִישׁ כַּאֲחֵיו*, each man is like his brother — they must treat everyone like a brother (R' Yitzchok of Vorki).

צו שלישי יא וְזֹאת תֹּדַת זֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיב
 ז/יא-טו יב לַיהוָה: אִם עַל-תּוֹדָה יִקְרִיבֶנּוּ וְהִקְרִיב א
 עַל-זֶבַח הַתּוֹדָה חֲלֹת מִצּוֹת בְּלוּלֹת
 בַּשֶּׁמֶן וּרְקִיקֵי מִצּוֹת מִשְׁחִים בַּשֶּׁמֶן
 יג וְסֵלֹת מְרֻבֶּכֶת חֹלֶת בְּלוּלֹת בַּשֶּׁמֶן: עַל-
 חֹלֶת לֶחֶם חֲמֵץ יִקְרִיב קֶרְבֶּנוֹ עַל-זֶבַח
 יד תּוֹדַת שְׁלָמִיו: וְהִקְרִיב מִמֶּנּוּ אֶחָד מִכֹּל-
 קֶרְבֶּן תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה לִכְהֵן הַזֶּרֶק אֶת-גִּדּוֹ
 טו הַשְּׁלָמִים לוֹ יִהְיֶה: וּבִשֶּׁר זֶבַח תּוֹדַת שְׁלָמִיו
 בְּיוֹם קֶרְבֶּנוֹ יֹאכַל לֹא-יִנְיִחַ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד-בֹּקֶר:

ixe

offering. They are those that have survived a desert journey, dangerous imprisonment, serious illness, or a sea voyage. The *todah*, thanksgiving-offering is a form of *shelamim*, peace-offering, with two differences: The *todah* is eaten for a day and a night while a *shelamim* is eaten for two days and a night; and a *todah* must be accompanied by forty loaves, as will be described below. However, many other laws of the two offerings are derived from one another.

❖ § Symbolism of the Loaves

Thirty of the *todah's* loaves are unleavened and include oil. The other ten are leavened and without oil, but they contain the same amount of flour as the other thirty loaves combined. R' Hirsch explains that the leavened loaves symbolize growth and unrestrained freedom. The unleavened loaves represent food, and are either anointed or baked with oil to symbolize well-being — food and well-being are the two essentials of life. Thus the combination of leav-

ened and unleavened loaves in a *todah* shows that the person has emerged from constricting danger to unrestricted life (leavening), but he recognizes that he owes everything to God — his food and his well-being — and he rededicates himself to Him (*matzah*). One loaf from each of the four kinds is given to the Kohen to show our recognition that the deliverance from danger and the duty that flows from it are thanks to the Torah, whose emissary the Kohen is; the other thirty-six belong to the owner, who may share them with whomever he wishes. None are placed on the Altar.

The Sages teach that in time to come there will be no further need for offerings [of atonement, because people will no longer sin (*Yefei Toar*)], but there will always be thanksgiving-offerings (*Vayikra Rabbah* 9:7). This teaches both the importance of expressing gratitude and the teaching (*Pesachim* 50a) that in Messianic times, people will bless God even for

11-15 ¹¹ This is the law of the feast peace-offering that one will offer to HASHEM: ¹² If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving-offering, with the feast thanksgiving-offering shall he offer unleavened loaves mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and loaves of scalded fine flour mixed with oil. ¹³ With loaves of leavened bread shall he bring his offering; with his feast thanksgiving peace-offering. ¹⁴ From it he shall offer one from each offering as a gift to HASHEM; it shall belong to the Kohen who may throw the blood of the peace-offering. ¹⁵ And the flesh of his feast thanksgiving peace-offering must be eaten on the day of its offering; one may not leave any of it until morning.

what is seemingly bad, because they will realize that everything God does is ultimately good.^[1]

11. וְזֶבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים — *The feast peace-offering*. I.e., the thanksgiving-offering, which is a variety of peace-offering.

12. For a description of the loaves see 2:4 and 6:14.

13. לֶחֶם חֻמֵּץ — *Leavened bread*. No loaves from the thanksgiving-offering are placed on the Altar, thus there is no contradiction of 2:11, which prohibits leavened bread from the Altar.

14. אֶחָד מִכָּל-קֶרְבָּן — *One from each offering*. One loaf from each of the four varieties is a gift to the Kohanim,

and the rest is eaten by the owners and their guests. As for the animal, since it is a peace-offering, its service is identical to that of ordinary peace-offerings (7:28-34); thus, part of it is burned on the Altar, part goes to the Kohanim, and the rest goes to its owner (Rashi).

15. בַּיּוֹם קָרְבָּנוֹ — *On the day of its offering*. The Sages derive from the apparent redundancy of the first four words of the verse that this time limit applies to the flesh of all offerings, unless the Torah specifies otherwise. Thus, not only the *todah*, but also most other offerings are eaten for a day and a night. The major exception is an ordinary peace-offering, which may be eaten for two days and the

1. On the subject of the thanksgiving-offering, the Midrash cites the verse: וְכִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה יְהוָה יִכְבְּדֶנִּי (Psalms 50:23). The word יִכְבְּדֶנִּי is spelled with two nuns, upon which the Midrash comments that one should render God honor after honor (Vayikra Rabbah 9:2). The person who thanks God should have two honors in mind: He should be grateful for the miracle that saved him, and he should be grateful for the danger, as well, because his plight influenced him to repent, or at least to recognize his dependence on God. This is the idea behind the Talmudic dictum quoted above, that in future times people will bless God even for the seemingly bad (K'sav Sofer).

טז וְאִם-נָדָר אֶל נִדְבָה זָבַח קָרְבָּנוּ בַּיּוֹם
הַקָּרִיבוּ אֶת-זִבְחוֹ יֹאכֵל וּמִמַּחֲרֹת וְהַנּוֹתֵר
יז מִמֶּנּוּ יֹאכֵל; וְהַנּוֹתֵר מִבֶּשֶׂר הַזָּבַח בַּיּוֹם
יח הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בָּאֵשׁ יִשְׂרֶה; וְאִם הָאֵכָל יֹאכֵל
מִבֶּשֶׂר-זָבַח שְׁלָמָיו בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לֹא
יִרְצֶה הַמִּקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לֹא יִחָשֵׁב לוֹ פְּגוּל
יְהִיָּה וְהַנֶּפֶשׁ הָאֵכָלָת מִמֶּנּוּ עֲוֹנָה תִּשָּׂא:

intervening night, as will be explained in the next verse (*Rashi*, *Sifra*).⁽¹⁾

16. וְאִם-נָדָר אוֹ נִדְבָה — *But if ... a vow or a donation.* One wishes to bring an offering not because he has been spurred to do so by a miracle, but because of an inner desire to come closer to God.

A נָדָר, *vow*, is a personal obligation undertaken by someone who wishes to bring an offering. He declares, "I obligate myself to bring a peace-offering," and then he selects the animal of his choice. A נִדְבָה, *donation*, is not a personal obligation, but a declaration that a particular animal is consecrated for a peace-offering. The difference between the two would arise if the animal died or was stolen. In the case of a vow, since the obligation is upon the person, he is responsible to supply another animal for the offering. In the case of a donation, if the consecrated animal cannot be brought, there is no further responsibility upon him.

1. Indeed, since a *todah* is but a variety of peace-offering, why should it not be eaten for a day and a half, like all other peace-offerings? A *todah* comes to thank God for a miracle — but we are surrounded by miracles all day long! As we say in our prayers, we thank God for *Your miracles that are with us every day* (*Modim of Shemoneh Esrei*); thus, when we bring an offering, it is only because we happened to become aware of one miracle, while we remain oblivious to the others. Therefore, a *todah* may be eaten for only one day — tomorrow there will be other miracles for which to be grateful (*Imrei Emes*).

If it is not a thanksgiving-offering, but an ordinary peace-offering, then loaves are not part of the offering and it may be eaten for an additional day (*Rashi*).

— *On the day ... and on the next day, what is left over.* The offering may be eaten for the balance of the day it is brought, the following night and the next day, a total of two days and the intervening night. The next verse provides that anything left over at the end of the second day may not be eaten; it must be burned on the morning of the third day (*Ramban*).

It is preferable to eat all the flesh on the first day, but if anything is left over, there is one more day (but not an additional night) when it may be eaten (*Sifra*).

18. פְּגוּל / Pigul — Rejected

An offering can become disqualified as *pigul* if the person performing the service has specific improper thoughts in mind. These disqualify-

7 ¹⁶ But if his feast offering is for a vow or a donation, it
 16-18 must be eaten on the day he offered his feast-offering;
 and on the next day, what is left over may be eaten.¹⁷ But
 what is left over from the flesh of the feast-offering must
 be burned in the fire on the third day.¹⁸ And if some of
 the flesh of his feast thanksgiving peace-offering was
 intended to be eaten on the third day, it is not acceptable,
 the one who offers it may not intend this — it remains
 rejected; and the soul that eats it shall bear her sin.

ing thoughts, all of which involve an invalid time, are the following: (a) the blood service will be performed after the end of the current day; (b) the sacrificial parts will be placed on the Altar after the beginning of the next morning; or (c) the meat of the offering will be eaten after its allotted time. Any of these thoughts invalidate the offering immediately, and require that it be burned. Anyone who eats *pigul* is liable to the serious penalty of *כרת*, spiritual excision, as defined below. There are other ways in which improper thoughts can invalidate an offering, but only these three make it *pigul* and subject the one who eats it to *kares*, spiritual excision, as given in this verse. Our verse speaks of a peace-offering, which may be eaten for two days and a night, but the same disqualification applies to all offerings, each according to the time during which it may be eaten (Rambam, Hil. Pesulei HaMukdashin 13:1-3).

הָאָכַל יֹאכַל — Was intended to be eaten. If he had actually eaten on the third day, the offering would not become invalid retroactively. As noted above, the verse speaks of someone who, during the slaughter, intended that it would

be eaten then (*Rashi*).

Although *Rashi* mentioned only the slaughter, this invalidation applies to other cases as well. The Sages derive that an offering can become *pigul* if the invalidating intention took place during any of the four services that are necessary in order to permit the offering to be "eaten," either by people or by the flames of the Altar. The four services are: (a) *שחיטה*, slaughter; (b) *קבלה*, receiving the blood in a vessel; (c) *הזלכה*, bringing the blood to the Altar; and (d) *זריקה*, throwing or otherwise applying the blood to the Altar (*Sifra*).

פגול — Rejected. Onkelos renders *מרחק* as *distanced*. It is rejected for use and therefore must be "kept at a distance."

עונה תשא — Shall bear her sin. The Sages derive that this term means *כרת*, spiritual excision. [See comm. to *kares* end of v. 20.]

19-21. אָכִילָה בְּטֻמְאָה / Eating in a State of Contamination

The meat of offerings must be eaten in a state of *טָהוּרָה*, purity, on the part of both the meat and the eater. This passage sets forth the prohibitions and the penalties for intentional violation of this require-

יט וְהִבְשֵׁר אֶשְׁר־יִגַע בְּכָל-טֹמֵא לֹא יֵאָכֵל
בָּאֵשׁ יִשְׂרָף וְהִבְשֵׁר כָּל-טְהוֹר יֵאָכֵל בָּשָׂר:
כ וְהִנָּפֵשׁ אֶשְׁר־תֹּאכַל בָּשָׂר מִזֶּבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים
אֲשֶׁר לַיהוָה וְטִמְאַתּוֹ עָלָיו וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ
כא הֵהוּא מֵעַמִּיהֶ: וְנָפֵשׁ כִּי־תִגַע בְּכָל-טֹמֵא

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ment. Although the Torah mentions the penalties with regard to peace-offerings, they apply to all other offerings, as well. For an unintentional violation, the penalty is an *אָשָׁם*, *guilt-offering* (5:2-3).

19. וְהִבְשֵׁר — *But the flesh*. The verse refers only to sacrificial meat that may be eaten if it is pure, such as *שְׁלָמִים*, *peace-offerings*; if such meat becomes contaminated, it may not be eaten (*Rashi*). But the prohibitions do not apply to *pigul* (v. 18), which is forbidden in any case (*Mizrachi*).

Rambam states that although it is forbidden to contaminate sacred meat, one who does so is not liable lashes, but one who eats it, is (*Hil. Pesulei HaMukdashim* 18:12).

לֹא יֵאָכֵל — *May not be eaten*. Like every negative commandment for which no penalty is specified, the violator incurs lashes (*Rashi*, v. 20). Only for transgressions mentioned

in the next two verses is there a penalty of *כֶּרֶת*, *spiritual excision*.^[1]

וְהִבְשֵׁר — *But of the [uncontaminated] flesh*. This apparent redundancy comes to teach that even if part of the meat or part of an organ became unacceptable — because it was taken out of the holy area where it was required to be eaten — the part that remained inside is still eligible to be eaten (*Rashi*).

כָּל-טְהוֹר — *Any uncontaminated person*. The flesh of a peace-offering may be eaten by any eligible person, not merely the owner (*Rashi*; *Sifra*).

20-21. וְטִמְאַתּוֹ עָלָיו — *While his contamination is upon him*. [Both verses refer to a contaminated person, but they differ in this regard: Verse 20, which speaks of "his" contamination, refers to someone who became impure as a result of his own bodily secretions (*Rashi*). Verse 21 specifies a contamination that resulted from touching other bodies or

1. Someone informed R'Shneur Zalman, author of *Tanya*, that a young man who occasionally visited him was involved with the so-called Enlightened Ones, who combated the observance of the commandments. The *Tanya* summoned the young man and warned him against the bad influence of his new comrades.

The man replied jocularly, "I am not easily influenced. I come to you as well, but I have not become a *chassid*!"

The rabbi answered, "There is a basic difference between the holy and the profane. Regarding holy meat, the Torah says *Whatever touches its flesh becomes holy* (6:20), but the Sages explain that this applies only if the taste of the holy food was actually absorbed into the item touching it. But in the case of something that touches a contaminated item, even a mere touch is enough to contaminate. With you, unfortunately, you have only touched holiness, but not absorbed it. You have already absorbed the contamination of your new friends (*Itturei Torah*).

7 ¹⁹ But the flesh that touches any contaminated
 19-21 thing may not be eaten, it must be burned in fire; but
 of the [uncontaminated] flesh, any uncontaminated
 person may eat the flesh.²⁰ If a person eats flesh from the
 feast peace-offering that is HASHEM's while his contam-
 ination is upon him, that soul will be cut off from its
 people.²¹ If a person touches any contamination —

objects. In either case, the prohibition and penalty are the same (*Ibn Ezra*.)
 השלמים — The peace-offering. The prohibition applies to all other offerings as well. That only peace-offerings are specified is to teach that the prohibition applies to sacred objects that, like peace-offerings, are placed upon the Altar. Thus, animals or food belonging to the Temple treasury but not intended for offering [בְּדֵק הַבֵּית] are excluded (*Zevachim* 46a-b, *Yevamos* 7a).

כָּרֵס / Kares

וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ — That soul will be cut off. This refers to the punishment of *kares*, spiritual excision.

There is a dispute among the commentators regarding the exact terms of *kares*. *Rashi* (17:9) states that the offender's [minor] children die and he dies young; however *Tosafos* (*Yevamos* 2a) contends that children do not die unless the Torah specifies that punishment. *Yerushalmi* (*Bikkurim* 2) states that the early death takes place before the offender becomes fifty, but *Bavli* (*Moed Kattan* 28a) holds that it happens between the ages of fifty and sixty.

Ramban (18:29), basing himself on variations in the verses that prescribe *kares*, sets forth that there are different degrees of this punishment, depending on the merits of the sinner

and the severity of his sin. If someone is basically righteous but could not withstand the temptation to commit a *kares*-sin, he will die young, but will not lose his share in the World to Come. If his sins outnumber his merits, his soul will be cut off from future reward, but he will not necessarily die young; he may even live a very long life. In cases of idolatry and blasphemy, the Torah prescribes both early death and loss of a share in the World to Come. Childlessness, too, applies only where the Torah specifies it.

Finally, *Ramban* stresses that the very mention of *kares* in the Torah demonstrates that there is eternal reward for the soul. If there were not an unimaginable degree of spiritual bliss awaiting the righteous soul after it leaves its body, there could be no such thing as *kares* after death.

21. בְּכֹל-טֻמְאָה — Any contamination. As the following examples make clear, the contamination must come from an אֲבִי הַטֻּמְאָה, father (source) of contamination. However, if a person touched a lesser degree of contamination — i.e., something that became contaminated through touching a first degree — he is not *tamei*, and is surely not liable to *karet*, spiritual excision, for eating meat of offerings (*Sifra* to 5:2).

בְּטִמְאָת אֲדָם אֹו | בְּבִהֶמָּה טִמְאָה אֹו
בְּכָל-שֶׁקֶץ טִמָּא וְאֶכֶל מִבְּשַׂר-יָבֵחַ
הַשְּׁלֵמִים אֲשֶׁר לַיהוָה וְנִבְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא
כב מַעֲמִיד: וַיִּדְבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
כג דִּבֶּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר כָּל-חֵלֶב שׁוֹר
כד וְכֶשֶׁב וְעֹז לֹא תֹאכְלוּ: וְחֵלֶב נִבְלָה וְחֵלֶב
טֶרֶף יַעֲשֶׂה לְכָל-מִלְאכָה וְאֶכֶל לֹא
כה תֹאכְלֻהוּ: כִּי כָל-אֶכֶל חֵלֶב מִן-הַבִּהֶמָּה
אֲשֶׁר יִקְרִיב מִמֶּנָּה אִשָּׁה לַיהוָה וְנִבְרְתָה
כו הַנֶּפֶשׁ הָאֶכֶלֶת מַעֲמִיד: וְכָל-דָּם לֹא תֹאכְלוּ
כז בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבֵיתֵיכֶם לָעוֹף וּלְבִהֶמָּה: כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ

A contaminated animal [carcass]. I.e., a non-kosher animal that died through any means, or a kosher animal that died through any means other than a valid *shechitah*. However, no live animal is טִמָּא, contaminated.

Any contaminated detestable carcass. This refers to the eight species of small animals or vermin that are named in 11:29-30.

22-27. חֵלֶב וְדָם / Fat and Blood

The prohibition against consuming fats and blood applies to all sheep, goats, and oxen, whether or not they are consecrated and non-consecrated. Although the word חֵלֶב is commonly translated as *fat*, there is no English word that defines it precisely. In the terms of this prohibition, "fat" means only the fatty tissue that is placed on the Altar in the case of offerings (see comm. 3:3), with the exception of a sheep's tail, and the kidneys and liver of all

animals, all of which may be eaten. As the following verses make clear, fat is forbidden only from species that are eligible to be used as offerings, but in the case of such animals as *צִי וְאֵיל*, deer and hart — and the other kosher wild animals that may not be used for offerings — the fat is permitted. This prohibition has already been given briefly in 3:17. See commentary there for R' Hirsch's reason for this prohibition.

23. שׁוֹר וְכֶשֶׁב וְעֹז — *Oxen, sheep, or goats.* Thus, the prohibition is strictly limited to the species that, as specified in verse 24, are eligible to be used as offerings.

24. נִבְלָה — *An animal that died.* I.e., a kosher species that died without *shechitah*.

טֶרֶף — *An animal that had been torn to death.* The animal did not die of its wounds; otherwise it would fall under the category of the previously mentioned נִבְלָה. Rather, the animal

whether human contamination or a contaminated animal [carcass] or any contaminated detestable [carcass], or any contaminated detestable carcass — and he then eats from the flesh of a feast peace-offering that is HASHEM's, then the soul will be cut off from its people.

²² HASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: ²³ Speak to the children of Israel saying: Any fat of oxen, sheep, or goats — you may not eat. ²⁴ The fat of an animal that died and the fat of an animal that had been torn to death may be put to any use; but you may not eat it. ²⁵ For anyone who eats the fat of animal species from which one may bring a fire-offering to HASHEM; the soul that eats will be cut off from its people. ²⁶ You may not consume any blood in any of your dwelling places, whether from fowl or from animals. ²⁷ Any person

had been mortally wounded and then was killed by *shechitah*. Or, the animal had a disease or wound that in a vital organ will cause its death within twelve months (*Chullin* 42a). In both cases, the meat may not be eaten even if the slaughter was performed by *shechitah*.

יֵעָשֶׂה לְכֹל-מִלְאָכָה — *May be put to any use.* The Torah has informed us elsewhere that one is permitted to make use of these fats for purposes other than food (*Pesachim* 21a). Here the Torah adds it may be used even with items that must remain uncontaminated, such as קִדְּשִׁים, *sacred objects*. This means that only the meat of an animal conveys contamination, but not its fats (*Rashi; Pesachim* 23a).

לֹא תֹאכְלֶהוּ — *You may not eat it.* The context of the verse indicates that when someone eats the fat of a dead or torn animal, he is in violation

of the prohibition against eating dead or torn animals — in addition to the standard prohibition against eating fat. According to the rule that a prohibition cannot take effect when there is an existing prohibition, there should be only one prohibition on this fat — that of *cheilev* — not the additional prohibition of dead or torn meat. Thus, our verse informs us that this is an exception to the rule, in that both prohibitions take effect (*Rashi, Chullin* 37a).

26. וְכָל-דָּם — *Any blood.* As the verse makes clear, the blood of all species of animal and fowl — but not fish and insects — is included in the prohibition (*Rashi*).

בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם — *In any of your dwelling places.* These prohibitions apply everywhere, even outside of *Eretz Yisrael*. This follows the rule that commandments which are חֻבוֹת הַיָּד, *obligations upon a person's*

אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאכַל כָּל-דָּם וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא
מַעֲמִידָה:

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וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דְּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר הַמִּקְרִיב אֶת-זֶבַח שְׁלָמָיו
לַיהוָה יָבִיא אֶת-קָרְבָּנוֹ לַיהוָה מִזֶּבַח
שְׁלָמָיו: יָדְיו תְּבִיאֶנָּה אֶת אֲשֵׁי יְהוָה

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body, apply everywhere; whereas blood, *obligations pertaining to land*, apply only in Eretz Yisrael. If so, why is it necessary for the verse to tell us that blood is forbidden everywhere; since it is a prohibition involving personal behavior, is it not understood that it applies in *all your dwelling places*? The Talmud explains: We might have thought that since the prohibitions of blood and fats are found in the chapter of offerings, perhaps the prohibitions apply only while the Temple is in existence and offerings can be brought (*Rashi*; *Kiddushin* 37b).

28-34. תְּנוּפָה וְתִרְוָמָה / Waving and Raising Up

This passage describes the ritual that is performed with the *אֲמֹרִין*, the parts of the peace-offering that are placed upon the Altar, and with the parts that are presented as a gift to the Kohanim. Before they are placed on the Altar or presented to the Kohanim, they are waved in all four directions, and lifted up and lowered, as described below; these motions signify that God controls existence everywhere. This service takes place

only in the case of a peace-offering, to teach that a major component of satisfaction with one's lot in life is his recognition that he is God's servant and that his perception of the world must be conditioned by the outlook of the Torah. Moreover, his peace-offering includes a gift to the Kohen, which requires the same waving service, because devotion to God cannot be without devotion to His servants (*R' Hirsch*).

R' Bachya comments that the reason these organs were designated for the service is because they symbolize motion and accomplishment. The breast houses the heart, which is the seat of desire; and the thigh represents the ability to move. Thus, by lifting and waving these organs, we acknowledge that these functions are in God's control.

29. יָבִיא אֶת-קָרְבָּנוֹ — *He shall deliver [lit. bring] his offering.* After the peace-offering is slaughtered and butchered, the owner of the offering brings the sacrificial parts — here called *his offering* — and delivers them to the Kohen (*Ralbag, Malbim*).⁽¹⁾

1. This is the only offering of which it is said that the owner himself should bring the parts to the Kohen. If someone sins against his king, it is unseemly for the sinner to bring him a gift; he must use an intermediary to seek forgiveness for him. But when someone brings a tribute

7 who consumes any blood — that soul will be cut off from
28-30 its people.

²⁸ HASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: ²⁹ Speak to the Children of Israel, saying: When one brings his feast peace-offering for HASHEM, he shall deliver his offering for HASHEM from his feast peace-offering. ³⁰ With his own hands shall he bring the fire-offerings of HASHEM:

30. וְיָרִיז תְּבִיאָנָה — With his own hands shall he bring. Both the owner and the Kohen share in the ritual of waving. During the waving service, the owner holds the parts on his hands, and the Kohen places his hands under those of the owner (Rashi from Menachos 61b).

אֵשֶׁי ה' — The fire-offerings of HASHEM. The fire-offering which goes on the Altar, consists of the חֶלֶב, fats, which are mentioned next. But the breast, upon which the fats are placed, is not part of the fire-offering. As stated in the next verse, the breast is a gift that is presented to the Kohanim (Rashi). The Sages derive that not only the חֶלֶב, fats, are waved, but all the parts that will be placed on the Altar, including the kidneys and diaphragm which are not fats (Sifra).

☛ The Parts and Their Order

As noted in the previous comment, the parts mentioned in this passage are of two categories: those that are burned upon the Altar and those that are presented to the Kohanim. The

sacrificial parts are enumerated in 3:3-4. The priestly gifts are the חֶזֶה, breast, mentioned in this verse, and the שֵׁק, thigh (v. 32). All are “lifted and waved” together, in the manner described below.

Our verse states clearly that the fats are placed on top of the breast, which serves as their receptacle. It should be noted also that, although it is not mentioned in our verse, the thigh is held alongside the breast throughout this service (see 10:15). However, there are three verses that discuss the waving service, and they give apparently conflicting accounts of how the various parts are to be held. Our verse and 9:20 state that the fats are placed atop the breast, but 10:15 states that the breast and thigh are on top of the fats.

To resolve this contradiction, the Sages (Menachos 62a) teach that the position of the parts was changed during the process. The sequence is as follows:

(a) Our verse is the first step in the process. After the offering has been cut into its prescribed parts, a Kohen

to his monarch, it is an honor both for himself and for the king that he bring it personally. So, too, the person who brings a peace-offering deserves to bring it himself (Kli Yakar).

In a different interpretation, Hamek Davar explains that an owner should bring his living animal to the Temple to present to the Kohanim. This teaches that a person who is engaged in performing a mitzvah should never feel embarrassed. There is nothing shameful about even the greatest person carrying a lamb in the street, if he is doing it to serve God.

אֶת־הַחֵלֶב עַל־הַחֹהֶה יִבְיָאֲנוּ אֶת הַחֹהֶה
 לְהִנִּיף אֹתוֹ תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְהִקְטִיר לא
 הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַחֵלֶב הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהִיָּה הַחֹהֶה
 לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו: וְאֵת שׁוֹק הַיָּמִין תִּתְּנוּ לב
 תְּרוּמָה לִכְהֵן מִזִּבְחֵי שְׁלֵמִיכֶם: הַמִּקְרִיב לג
 אֶת־דָּם הַשְּׁלָמִים וְאֶת־הַחֵלֶב מִבְּנֵי אֲהֲרֹן
 לוֹ תִּהְיֶה שׁוֹק הַיָּמִין לְמִנְחָה: כִּי אֶת־חֹהֶה
 הַתְּנוּפָה וְאֵת שׁוֹק הַתְּרוּמָה לְקַחְתִּי מֵאֵת
 בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִזִּבְחֵי שְׁלֵמִיָּהֶם וְאֶתָּן אֹתָם
 לְאַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן וּלְבָנָיו לְחֶק־עוֹלָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל: וְאֵת מִשְׁחַת אֲהֲרֹן וּמִשְׁחַת בָּנָיו לד
 מֵאִשֵּׁי יְהוָה בְּיוֹם הַקָּרִיב אֹתָם לִכְהֵן לַיהוָה:
 וְאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵתֵת לָהֶם בְּיוֹם מִשְׁחוֹ לו
 אֹתָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל חֶקֶת עוֹלָם לְדִרְתָּם:

brings the pieces, with the fats atop the breast.

(b) The Kohen transfers the parts to the owner, and in the process turns them over, so that the fats are atop the breast and the thigh (10:15). A second Kohen places his hands under those of the owner, and, together, they perform the waving.

(c) They hand the parts to a third Kohen, and turn them over again in the process, so that the fats are atop the breast (9:20). The third Kohen takes the fats for burning and the breast and thigh for distribution to the Kohanim (*Rashi* and *Menachos* 61b-62a).

[Since our verse discusses the breast only as a receptacle for the fats, it omits mention of the thigh.]

הַחֹהֶה — *The breast*. The Talmud

(*Chullin* 45a) defines the breast as the area from the neck to the stomach, including two ribs on each side.

תְּנוּפָה — *Wave-service*. This word in our verse, and תְּרוּמָה, *raising-up*, in verse 34 are parts of the same service. The parts are *waved* [in all four directions of the compass (*Rashi*; *Exodus* 29:24)] and then *raised up* and down (*Rashi*; *Succah* 37b).

32. שׁוֹק הַיָּמִין — *The right thigh*. This gift to the Kohen is part of the right *hind* leg. The animal's hind leg has three limbs, of which this is the middle one (*Rashi*). However, *Rambam* (*Hil. Maaseh HaKorbanos* 9:10) rules according to the opinion that the שׁוֹק is the top two sections of the hind leg (*Chullin* 134b).

the fat atop the breast shall he bring; the breast in order to wave as a wave-service before HASHEM.³¹ The Kohen shall cause the fat to go up in smoke on the Altar; and the breast is for Aaron and his sons.³² You shall give the right thigh as a raised-up gift to the Kohen, from your feast peace-offerings.³³ Anyone from among the sons of Aaron who may offer the blood of the peace-offering and the fat — the right thigh shall be his as a portion.³⁴ For the breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising-up have I taken from the Children of Israel, from their feast peace-offering, and I have given them to Aaron the Kohen and his sons as an eternal stipend from the Children of Israel.

³⁵ This is the anointment gift of Aaron and the inauguration gift of his sons from the fire-offerings of HASHEM, on the day He brought them near to minister to HASHEM;³⁶ that HASHEM commanded to be given them on the day He anointed them from among the Children of Israel; it is an eternal decree for their generations.

34: חזה התנופה ... שוק התנופה — *The breast of the waving ... the thigh of the raising-up.* Both organs are waved and raised together, but Scripture always associates the breast only with waving and the thigh only with raising. *Rashi* to 10:15 states that he does not know why.

Ramban, there, suggests that the use of these terms, one for the breast and the other for the thigh, derives from the days when the Tabernacle was inaugurated (*Exodus* 29: 22-25). A unique feature of the Inauguration service was that the thigh was not a gift to the Kohen, but went up in smoke on the Altar. In commemoration of that, the thigh was called a *terumah* because it was separated and

raised up from the offering — like the *terumah* that is separated from crops. On the other hand, the breast of the Inauguration was waved and given to Moses, who served as Kohen Gadol for that service. The privilege of the Kohanim to receive the thigh and breast of future offerings was an outcome of the Inauguration, when they, as well as the Tabernacle, were consecrated, therefore the Torah retained the nominal association of waving with the breast, and raising with the thigh.

35. זאת משחת — *This is the anointment gift.* In recognition of the elevation of the Kohanim to their position of greatness (*Onkeles; Ibn*

צו / וְזאת התורה לעלה למנחה ולחטאת
 ז/לז-לח / וְלֹאֲשֶׁם וּלְמִלּוּאִים וּלְזִבְחַת הַשְּׁלָמִים: אֲשֶׁר
 צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי בְּיוֹם צִוּתוֹ
 אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַקְרִיב אֶת-קָרְבָּנֵיהֶם
 לַיהוָה בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינַי:
 ח/ רביעי א-ב / וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: קַח אֶת-
 אֶהָרָן וְאֶת-בָּנָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֵת הַבְּגָדִים וְאֵת
 שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְאֵת פֶּרֶךְ הַחֹטָאת וְאֵת שְׁנֵי
 הָאֵילִים וְאֵת סֵל הַמִּצּוֹת: וְאֵת כָּל-הָעֵדָה

Ezra). The Torah has presented them with the above gifts: the breast and thigh, and the other gifts mentioned in the preceding chapters (Rashbam).

37. וְזאת התורה — *This is the law.* Reish Lakish said, "Why does it say 'This is the law of the elevation-offering ...?' To teach that if someone studies the laws of an offering it is regarded as if he had actually offered it" (Menachos 110a).^[1]

— *And the Inauguration-offering.* The offerings brought on the day the בְּהוֹנָה, *priesthood*, was

instituted [The offerings are given in Exodus 29:1-37 and further, 8:1-32] (Rashi). According to Malbim, these are the meal-offerings brought by individual Kohanim on the day they begin their service.

38. בְּהַר סִינַי ... בַּמִּדְבָּר סִינַי — *On Mount Sinai ... in the Wilderness of Sinai.* The laws in all their detail were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and reviewed in the Wilderness in the אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד, *Tent of Meeting*. Alternatively, some of the commandments were given on the Mount and others later on, in the Wilderness (Ramban).

VIII

Consecration of the Kohanim

This chapter describes the consecration of Aaron and his sons as Kohanim. It will be followed by chapters nine and ten, which discuss the consecration of the Tabernacle.

According to Rashi (v. 2), this chapter was taught to Moses on Adar 23, seven days before the Tabernacle was permanently erected on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. Consequently, in the chronological sense, this chapter should have been coupled with Ex-

1. The Kotzker said, "I thought I would have disciples who would never sin and never even be tempted, because they would not have time to listen to the evil inclination. If someone is totally immersed in the study of Torah, he never needs offerings, because he is too busy to sin."

7 ³⁷ This is the law of the elevation-offering, the meal-
37-38 offering, the sin-offering, and the guilt-offering; and the
Inauguration-offering, and the feast peace-offering;
³⁸ which HASHEM commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on
the day He commanded the Children of Israel to bring
their offerings to HASHEM, in the Wilderness of Sinai.

8 H ASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: ² Take Aaron and his
1-3 sons with him, the garments and the oil of anoint-
ments, the bull of the sin-offering, the two rams, and
the basket of matzos. ³ Gather the entire assembly

odus 40, which discusses the conse-
cration process. Instead, the Torah
inserts the laws of the various offer-
ings (ch. 1-7), which were taught on
Rosh Chodesh Nissan, when the
Tabernacle was consecrated. This,
Rashi explains, is an instance of the
principle that אין מוקדם ומאוחר
בתורה, meaning that the Torah does
not necessarily follow chronological
order.

Ramban (v. 2) disagrees. He holds
that everything from Exodus 40
through Leviticus 10 was taught on
Adar 23. The instructions about the
offerings (ch. 1-7) were taught as part
of the consecration ritual because
offerings were an essential part of the
ritual. Or HaChaim adds that it
would have been incongruous to
instruct the Kohanim to bring offer-
ings without first instructing them in
the sacrificial laws.

2. קח את אהרן — Take Aaron. The
command was not that Moses take

hold bodily of Aaron. Rather, the
word take signifies "win him over to
yourself with words"; Moses was to
convince him and his sons to assume
the priesthood (Rashi). As Rashi
notes to 9:7, Aaron felt he was
unworthy for this task, and therefore
had to be persuaded.

... פר — The bull. The verse refers to
the offerings mentioned in Exodus
chapter 29. The bull was a sin-offer-
ing (ibid. 29:14); one ram was an
elevation-offering (ibid. 29:18); the
second ram is referred to there as איל
מקליים, ram of inauguration (ibid.
29:22), which Rashi explains as a
synonym for peace-offering. Indeed,
the further description of its service
makes clear that it was a peace-offer-
ing (vs. 29:23-28). See commentary
below, to verse 22.

3. כל־העדה — The entire assembly.
God wanted the entire nation to see
that Aaron's family had been chosen
as Kohanim (Ramban).^[1]

1. R' Mendel of Vorki lamented to his master, R' Mendel of Kotzk, that people flocked to him
and regarded him as a true rebbe, though he was unworthy of such eminence.

The Kotzker comforted him. "This is nothing new. The Torah tells us that Moses did as
God commanded him and the entire nation gathered to the Tent of Meeting. Clearly, if a Jew
carries out the will of God, his fellow Jews will gather around him" (Mimayenos Hanetzach).

ו הַקֹּהֵל אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה
בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתוֹ וַתִּקְהַל הָעֵדָה אֶל-
ה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעֵדָה
ו זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת: וַיִּקְרַב
מֹשֶׁה אֶת-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת-בָּנָיו וַיִּרְחֹץ אֹתָם
ו בְּמִים: וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת-הַכֹּהֲנֶת וַיַּחְגֵּר אֹתוֹ
בְּאַבְנֶט וַיַּלְבֵּשׂ אֹתוֹ אֶת-הַמַּעִיל וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו
אֶת-הָאֶפֶד וַיַּחְגֵּר אֹתוֹ בְּחֹשֶׁב הָאֶפֶד וַיֹּאפֶד
ח לוּ בּוֹ: וַיִּשֶׂם עָלָיו אֶת-הַחֹשֶׁן וַיִּתֵּן אֶל-
ט הַחֹשֶׁן אֶת-הָאוּרִים וְאֶת-הַתְּמִים: וַיִּשֶׂם
אֶת-הַמִּצְנֶפֶת עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּשֶׂם עַל-
הַמִּצְנֶפֶת אֶל-מֹול פָּנָיו אֶת צִיץ הַזָּהָב נֹר
י הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: וַיִּקַּח

אל-פתח — *To the entrance*. Since there were 600,000 males between the ages of twenty and sixty, the entire assembly consisted of several million people. This was a miraculous instance of a small area holding a huge throng of people (*Rashi*).

According to *Ibn Ezra*, the assembly consisted only of the tribal heads and the elders.

5. וְזֶה הַדָּבָר — *This is the thing*. Moses stressed that everything he was about to do was at God's behest; he sought no glory for himself and his brother (*Rashi*).^[1]

The Sages say that Moses had the status of a king; if so, it would be forbidden for him to degrade his regal standing by washing and dressing Aaron and his sons, as related in the following verse. Consequently, Moses had to inform the people that everything he was about to do was commanded by God (*Or HaChaim*).

6-36. With some exceptions these verses tell how Moses dressed the Kohanim in the vestments described in *Exodus* ch. 28, and how the commandments of *Exodus* 29:1-37

1. But even though Moses proclaimed that he was acting only at God's behest, how could he make the people believe him if they had doubts? *Tiferes Shlomo* writes that Moses had within himself the spirit of the entire nation. When he served God with all his heart, all the people were inspired with him. If so, we can understand the effectiveness of his declaration here. When he announced that he was carrying out God's command, the people felt a surge of enthusiasm at the service that was about to be carried out. When they became conscious of this spirit of holiness, they realized that it could be possible only because it was indeed God's command that was being performed (*Otzar Chaim*).

to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ⁴ Moses did as HASHEM commanded him; and the assembly was gathered to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ⁵ Moses said to the assembly: 'This is the thing that HASHEM commanded to be done.'

⁶ Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and he immersed them in water. ⁷ He placed the tunic upon him and girded him with the belt; he dressed him in the robe and placed the ephod on him; he girded him with the belt of the ephod and secured the ephod with it. ⁸ He placed the breastplate upon him; and in the breastplate he placed the Urim and Tumim. ⁹ He put the headdress upon his head; and upon the headdress, toward his face, he placed the golden headplate, the sacred diadem, as HASHEM had commanded Moses.

were carried out. The commentary will be limited to subjects not discussed there.

6. **וַיָּקֵם** — Brought ... forward. Moses brought the Kohanim to the **כִּיּוֹר**, laver, where he would wash them in preparation for their induction into the priesthood (*Ibn Ezra*). Generally, every time the Kohanim entered the Courtyard to perform the service, they would wash only their hands and feet in the laver, but that was not the washing called for in this commandment. The requirement here was for immersion in a *mikveh* (*Rashi* to *Exodus* 29:4).

Immersion requires that a person be submerged completely in the water, without even a hair protruding. This symbolizes the idea that one should "submerge" himself in God's holiness, to the exclusion of extraneous and contradictory influences (*Michtav Me'Eliyahu*). This was a necessary and fitting prerequisite to

the consecration of the Kohanim to the Temple service.

וַיִּדְבֹּק אֹתָם — And he immersed them. Presumably, he did not immerse them all at the same time. First he immersed and dressed Aaron, and then he went on to Aaron's children (*Ramban*).

8. **אֶת־הַאֲוִרִים וְאֶת־הַתֻּמִּים** — The Urim and Tumim. This was a slip of parchment upon which was written the secret Name of God. It was placed in the fold of the breastplate and, when consulted by the Kohen Gadol, it enabled him to inquire of God to learn the answers to questions of major import (see *Rashi* to *Exodus* 28:30).

9. **עַל־הַמִּצְנֶפֶת אֶל־מֹל פָּנָיו** — Upon the headdress, towards his face. The golden headplate itself rested upon the Kohen Gadol's forehead, but it was held in place by three threads that were tied at the back of his head.

מִשָּׁה אֶת־שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וַיִּמָּשַׁח אֶת־
 יא הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ אֹתָם: וַיִּזְ
 מֶמֶנוּ עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ שִׁבְעַת פַּעַמִּים וַיִּמָּשַׁח
 אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת־כָּל־כֵּלָיו וְאֶת־הַכִּיֹּר
 יב וְאֶת־כִּנּוֹ לְקֹדֶשֶׁם: וַיִּצֹק מִשְׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה עַל
 יג רֹאשׁ אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּמָּשַׁח אֹתוֹ לְקֹדֶשׁ: וַיִּקְרַב
 מֹשֶׁה אֶת־בְּנֵי אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּלְבָּשֶׁם כְּתֹנֶת וַיַּחְגֹּר
 אֹתָם אֲבֵנֹת וַיַּחֲבֹשׁ לָהֶם מִגְבָּעוֹת כְּאֲשֶׁר
 חמישי יד צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: וַיַּגֵּשׁ אֶת פֶּר הַחֲטָאֹת
 וַיִּסְמֹךְ אֶהֱרֹן וּבָנָיו אֶת־יְדֵיהֶם עַל־רֹאשׁ פֶּר
 טו הַחֲטָאֹת: וַיִּשְׁחֹט וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁה אֶת־הַדָּם וַיִּמָּן
 עַל־קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ וַיַּחֲטֹא
 אֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת־הַדָּם יָצַק אֶל־יִסּוּד

The middle thread was drawn over the headdress. Thus, the thread was *upon the headdress*; the headplate was positioned *toward his face*, in front of the headdress (Rashi here and to Exodus 28:37).

11. וַיִּזְ — *He sprinkled.* Rashi comments that he does not know where Moses was commanded to do this. Ramban suggests that the requirement to sprinkle upon the Altar is inferred from Exodus 40:10. There Moses was told to anoint the Altar, and then to sanctify it and make it *holy of holies*. The implication is that after its anointment, a further step was required to intensify its holiness to a greater degree.

12. וַיִּמָּשַׁח... וַיִּצֹק — *He poured ... and he anointed.* First, Moses poured the oil on Aaron's head, then he

placed some between his eyebrows and with his finger he drew one spot of oil to the other (Rashi). Rashi to Exodus 29:2 states that when the anointment was completed, the oil was in the form of the Greek letter *chi*, or an inverted 1. See above, 2:4.

וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ — *To sanctify him.* There are two kinds of anointment. A king is anointed to invest him with a spirit of power — but a Kohen Gadol's elevation is to a station of holiness (Haamek Davar).

15. וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה... וַיִּשְׁחֹט — *He slaughtered it, and Moses took the blood.* Although Moses is not mentioned until the blood service, he performed the slaughter as well. During the seven days of dedication from Adar 23 until Rosh Chodesh Nissán, Moses served as *Kohen Gadol* and

10-15 ¹⁰ Moses took the oil of anointment and anointed the Tabernacle and everything within it; thus he sanctified them. ¹¹ He sprinkled from it seven times upon the Altar; he anointed the Altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, in order to sanctify them. ¹² He poured from the oil of anointment upon Aaron's head, and he anointed him to sanctify him. ¹³ Moses brought the sons of Aaron forward, he dressed them in tunics and girded them with the belt and bound the headdress upon them, as HASHEM had commanded Moses.

¹⁴ He brought forward the sin-offering bull; Aaron and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the sin-offering bull. ¹⁵ He slaughtered it, and Moses took the blood and placed it on the corners of the Altar, all around, with his finger, and he purified the Altar; he poured the blood upon the base of

performed the entire service (*Sifra*).^[1]

When a verse mentions two acts that were done by the same person, the Torah sometimes gives both verbs first and does not mention the subject until later. Thus, our verse speaks of two services, slaughter and the receiving of the blood, but not until the blood service is Moses mentioned as the one who performed it. Even though Moses is not mentioned in connection with the slaughter, this does not contradict the tradition of the Sages that every facet of the Inauguration service was done by him (*Shem Olam*).

Meshech Chochmah offers a reason why Moses is not mentioned in connection with the slaughter. Since

the rule is that the slaughter of offerings is valid even if it is done by an Israelite, the verse chooses to specify Moses' priestly status in connection with the blood service, which may be performed exclusively by Kohanim.

Rashi to v. 28 cites *Avodah Zarah* 34a that Moses wore a white tunic during this seven-day period. *Gur Aryeh* explains that his exalted status during this period required him to wear a unique garment. That it was pure white and without any embellishment was to symbolize that Moses was the personification of pure, unadulterated intellect, and was completely devoted to the service of God.

1. Why was it necessary for Moses to perform the service for the first week? It is like a princess who is married off as a young child. Since she doesn't know how to keep house, her mother agrees to run the household so that her daughter can observe her and learn how it should be done. Here, too, Moses was instructed to perform the entire service so that Aaron and his sons could watch and learn (*Sifra*).

טו המזבֵּחַ וַיִּקְדְּשֵׁהוּ לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו: וַיִּקַּח אֶת-כָּל-
הַחֹלֶב אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת יִתְרַת הַכֹּהֵן
וְאֶת-שְׁתֵּי הַכִּלִּית וְאֶת-חִלְבֵּהוּ וַיִּקְטֹר מִשֶּׁה
יז הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְאֶת-הַפֶּה וְאֶת-עֲרוֹ וְאֶת-בֶּשְׂרוֹ
וְאֶת-פָּרְשׁוֹ שָׂרָף בָּאֵשׁ מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה בְּאֶשֶׁר
יח צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: וַיִּקְרַב אֶת אֵיל הָעֹלָה
וַיִּסְמְכוּ אֹהֲרָן וּבָנָיו אֶת-יְדֵיהֶם עַל-רֹאשׁ
יט הָאֵיל: וַיִּשְׁחֹט וַיִּזְרֹק מִשֶּׁה אֶת-הַדָּם עַל-
כ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְאֶת-הָאֵיל נָתַח לַנְּתָחַיו
וַיִּקְטֹר מִשֶּׁה אֶת-הָרֹאשׁ וְאֶת-הַנְּתָחִים
כא וְאֶת-הַפֶּה: וְאֶת-הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת-הַכִּרְעִים רָחַץ
בַּמַּיִם וַיִּקְטֹר מִשֶּׁה אֶת-כָּל-הָאֵיל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
עֲלֶה הוּא לָרִיחַ-נִיחֹחַ אֲשֶׁה הוּא לַיהוָה
כב בְּאֶשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: וַיִּקְרַב אֶת-
הָאֵיל הַשְּׁנִי אֵיל הַמִּלֻּאִים וַיִּסְמְכוּ אֹהֲרָן
כג וּבָנָיו אֶת-יְדֵיהֶם עַל-רֹאשׁ הָאֵיל: וַיִּשְׁחֹט
וַיִּקַּח מִשֶּׁה מִדָּמּוֹ וַיִּתֵּן עַל-תְּנוּךְ אֶזְנוֹ-אֹהֲרָן
וְהַיְמָנִית וְעַל-בִּהֶן יָדוֹ הַיְמָנִית וְעַל-בִּהֶן רַגְלוֹ

And he purified ... וַיִּקְדְּשֵׁהוּ ... and he sanctified it. By means of this blood service, Moses purified the Altar, removing it from its previous secular status and inducting it into a state of holiness. He sanctified it so that it could be used to affect atonement for sinners (Rashi).

To provide atonement for it. Sifra teaches that immediate atonement was needed for the possible sin that some people may have been shamed into contributing for

the construction of the Tabernacle. Such contributions were not truly voluntary and therefore tainted with a breath of thievery.

22. The inauguration ram. — *The inauguration ram*. This ram was a *שלמים*, *peace-offering*. Indeed, the word *מלאים* (from *מלא*, *complete*) and the word *שלמים* (from *שלם*, *whole*) are closely related. The service of this ram completed the process by which the Kohanim were consecrated for their new role (Rashi).

the Altar and he sanctified it to provide atonement for it. ¹⁶ Then he took all the fat that is upon the innards, the diaphragm of the liver and the two kidneys with their fat; and Moses caused them to go up in smoke on the Altar. ¹⁷ And the bull, with its hide, flesh and waste, he burned in fire outside the camp, as HASHEM had commanded Moses. ¹⁸ Then he brought near the ram for the elevation-offering; Aaron and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the ram. ¹⁹ He slaughtered it, and Moses threw its blood upon the Altar, all around. ²⁰ He cut the ram into its parts; Moses caused the head, the parts, and the fats to go up in smoke. ²¹ He washed the innards and the feet with water; Moses caused the entire ram to go up in smoke on the Altar — it was an elevation-offering, for a satisfying aroma, it was a fire-offering to HASHEM, as HASHEM had commanded Moses.

²² Then he brought near the second ram, the inauguration ram; Aaron and his sons leaned their hands upon the head of the ram. ²³ He slaughtered it, and Moses took from its blood and placed it upon the middle of Aaron's right ear, upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the big toe of his right foot.

Ramban explains the function of the three inauguration offerings (see comm. to v. 2), and in the process shows why only the peace-offering ram is called the *inauguration ram*. The bull sin-offering came to atone for and sanctify the Altar (v. 15), and the ram elevation-offering came, like all voluntary elevation-offerings, to achieve Divine favor for the Kohanim on whose behalf it was offered (see 1:3). The ram peace-offering came as an expression of gratitude to God for having allowed the Kohanim the great privilege of being His servants. This offering was

the culmination of the inauguration service and, when it was completed, the Kohanim were finally sanctified sufficiently to perform the Temple service. In the Scriptural simile, the goal of the entire inauguration ritual was to fill *their hands* with that degree of holiness (Exodus 29:1). Since the peace-offering ram was the final step in this process, it could be called the *אֵיל קִלְאִים*, *inauguration ram*.

23. תָּנַחַר אֶזְנוֹ . . . תִּקְמִית — *The middle of [Aaron's] . . . right ear*. This is the tragus, i.e., the skin-covered projec-

כד הַיָּמִנִית: וַיִּקְרָב אֶת־בְּנֵי אֶהֱרֹן וַיִּתֵּן מֹשֶׁה
מִן־הַדָּם עַל־תְּנוּךְ אָזְנוֹם הַיָּמִנִית וְעַל־בֶּהֱן
יָדָם הַיָּמִנִית וְעַל־בֶּהֱן רִגְלָם הַיָּמִנִית וַיִּזְרֹק
כה מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וַיִּקַּח
אֶת־הַחֶלֶב וְאֶת־הָאֵלֶיָּה וְאֶת־כָּל־הַחֶלֶב
אֲשֶׁר עַל־הַקֶּרֶב וְאֶת־יִתְדֵת הַכֶּבֶד וְאֶת־שְׁתֵּי
כז הַכְּלִיֹּת וְאֶת־חֻלְבֵּהֶן וְאֶת־שׁוֹק הַיָּמִין: וּמִסַּל
הַמִּצּוֹת אֲשֶׁר | לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לֶקַח חֲלֹת מִצָּה
אַחַת וַחֲלֹת לֶחֶם שֶׁמֶן אַחַת וְרִקִּיק אֶחָד
כח וַיִּשֶׂם עַל־הַחֲלָבִים וְעַל שׁוֹק הַיָּמִין: וַיִּתֵּן
אֶת־הַכֹּל עַל כַּפֵּי אֶהֱרֹן וְעַל כַּפֵּי בָנָיו
כח וַיִּנָּף אַתָּם תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה
אֶתֶם מַעַל כַּפֵּיהֶם וַיִּקְטֹר המִזְבֵּחַ עַל־
הָעֹלָה מִלֵּאִים הֵם לָרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אִשָּׁה
כט הוּא לַיהוָה: וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַחֹה וַיַּנִּיפֶהוּ
תְנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מֵאֵיל הַמִּלֵּאִים לְמֹשֶׁה
הִיָּה לְמִנָּה בְּאֲשֶׁר צָנָה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:

tion in front of the external ear (Rashi 14:14 and Exodus 29:20). According to R' Saadiah Gaon, it is the ear lobe (see also Rambam, comm. to Negaim 14:9, Kafich ed.). The Chafetz Chaim (comm. to Sifra Metzora, perek 3) writes that the ear can be viewed as three concentric circles: The outermost circle is all soft flesh;

just inside is a circle of cartilage; and at the very center is the opening that leads to the middle and inner ear. The תְּנוּךְ of our verse and of 14:14 is the cartilage.^[1]

26. וּמִסַּל הַמִּצּוֹת — From the basket of matzos. The basket contained ten loaves each of the three kinds of

1. Although this ritual is a נִזְכָּר הַקָּטָב, Scriptural decree, it has a homiletic lesson that applies to everyone. The blood upon the ear symbolizes that the Kohanim should always listen to and obey God's commands. The hand is the organ that grasps things and that is active; so the blood upon the thumb symbolizes that the Kohanim should actively carry out His will. And the foot is the organ of movement; so the blood on the big toe symbolizes that the Kohanim should always move with alacrity to serve God (R' Avraham ben HaRambam).

²⁴ He brought the sons of Aaron forward, and Moses put some of the blood in the middle of their right ear, upon the thumb of their right hand and upon the big toe of their right foot; and Moses threw the blood upon the Altar, all around. ²⁵ He took the fat, and tail and all the fat that was upon the innards, the diaphragm of the liver, and the two kidneys and their fat; and the right thigh. ²⁶ From the basket of matzos that was before HASHEM he took one matzah loaf, one oily bread loaf, and one wafer, and placed them on the fats and on the right thigh. ²⁷ He put it all on Aaron's palms and on the palms of his sons; and he waved them as a wave-service before HASHEM. ²⁸ Moses took them from on their palms and caused them to go up in smoke on the Altar after the elevation-offering; they were inauguration offerings, for a gratifying aroma, it was a fire-offering to HASHEM. ²⁹ Moses took the breast and waved it as a wave-service before HASHEM; from the ram of the dedication it was a portion for Moses, as HASHEM had commanded Moses.

loaves listed in this verse (Rashi to Exodus 29:2). The loaves are described in the commentary to 2:4 and 6:14.

לֶחֶם שֶׁנֶּחֱמֵה — Oily bread loaf. All three kinds of matzos were made with oil; this one is called oily because it contained as much oil — one quarter-log — as the other two put together (Rashi; Menachos 89a).

28. וַיַּקְטֵר — And caused them to go up in smoke. This is the only case of a peace-offering thigh that was burned. [Generally it was a gift to the Kohen (7:32)] (Rashi).

Sforno explains that the thigh was burned to symbolize that the Kohen — whom the Inauguration service

had made eligible to enter the Sanctuary — is dedicating his power of mobility to God. The only other deviation from the norm is the peace-offering of the nazir, from which not only the thigh, but the foreleg were given to the Kohen (Numbers 6:19-20). This symbolizes that the nazir is devoting his handiwork to God's service.

29. לְמֹשֶׁה הָיָה לְקָנָה — It was a portion for Moses. As noted above, during the seven inauguration days, Moses functioned as the Kohen Gadol. He received the breast of the peace-offering as his portion because it always went to the Kohanim from peace-offerings.

צו שביעי ל וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁה מִשְׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וּמִן־הַדָּם אֲשֶׁר
ח/ל-לה עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּזְּ עַל־אַהֲרֹן עַל־בְּגָדָיו וְעַל־
בָּנָיו וְעַל־בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו אֹתוֹ וַיִּקְדֹּשׁ אֶת־אַהֲרֹן
אֶת־בְּגָדָיו וְאֶת־בָּנָיו וְאֶת־בְּגָדֵי בָנָיו אֹתוֹ:
לא וַיֹּאמֶר מִשָּׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו בְּשִׁלּוֹ
אֶת־הַבֶּשֶׂר פָּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְשֵׁם תֹּאכְלוּ
אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־הַלֶּחֶם אֲשֶׁר בְּסֵל הַמִּלֻּאִים כַּאֲשֶׁר
לב צִוִּיתִי לֵאמֹר אַהֲרֹן וּבָנָיו יֹאכְלֻהוּ: וְהַנּוֹתֵר
מפסיר לג בַּבֶּשֶׂר וּבַלֶּחֶם בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרְפוּ: וּמִפֶּתַח אֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד לֹא תֵצְאוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים עַד יוֹם מְלֹאת
יְמֵי מִלֻּאֵיכֶם בִּי שִׁבְעַת יָמִים יְמֵלֵא אֶת־
לד יְדְכֶם: כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה צִוָּה יְהוָה
לה לַעֲשׂוֹת לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם: וּפָתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
תִּשְׁבוּ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וּשְׁמֵרְתֶּם

30. — *And from the blood.* And from the blood. He was to take the blood only of the *inauguration ram* (*Sifra* according to *Gra*), by wiping off some of the blood that had been thrown upon the Altar (*Chizkuni, Exodus 29:21*). Whether or not the oil and the blood were mixed together is not clear (*Ramban*).

— *And on his sons.* A study of the relevant verses indicates that the consecration with oil was not the same for Aaron's sons as it was for him. In verse 12, we are told that Aaron was *anointed*, which, as explained there in the commentary, means that oil was smeared on his forehead in the shape of the

Greek *chi* (see 2:4). In the case of his sons, however, the term *anointment* is nowhere mentioned regarding them. We find only in this verse that oil was sprinkled upon them (*Ramban* to v. 11).

31. — *At the entrance of the Tent of the Meeting.* Ordinary peace-offerings were eaten throughout the camp of Israel. This peace-offering was given the higher status of *קָדְשֵׁי קָדְשִׁים*, *most sacred offering*, and had to be consumed in the Tabernacle area. Another part of this higher status is that it had to be consumed that day and evening (v. 32), unlike ordinary peace-offerings that could be consumed the follow-

³⁰ Moses took from the oil of anointment and from the blood that was on the Altar, and he sprinkled it upon Aaron and his vestments, and on his sons, and upon his sons and upon the vestments of his sons who were with him; thus he sanctified Aaron and his vestments, and his sons, and the vestments of his sons with him.

³¹ Moses said to Aaron and to his sons: Cook the flesh at the entrance of the Tent of the Meeting and there you shall eat it and the bread that is in the basket of the dedication-offerings; as I have been commanded, saying: 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.' ³² And whatever is left over of the flesh and of the bread, you shall burn in the fire. ³³ You shall not leave the entrance of the Tent of the Meeting for seven days, until the day when your days of inauguration are completed; for you shall be inaugurated for a seven-day period.

³⁴ As he did on this day, so HASHEM had commanded to be done to provide atonement on you. ³⁵ At the entrance of the Tent of Meeting shall you dwell day and night for a seven-day period, and you shall protect

ing day as well (Rashi, Ramban; Exodus 29:31, 34).

33. וְיָמְלֵא אֶת-יְדֵיכֶם — You shall be inaugurated [lit. your hands shall be filled]. As noted in the commentary to verse 22, the consecration of the Kohanim gave them the spiritual capability that is described as filling their hands with the priestly service. The same simile can carry with it the connotation of education, which carries with it the preparation to accept new responsibility. Since the Kohanim had to be trained in how to perform the service, they had to remain on the premises

for the entire seven-day period of the Inauguration service (Haamek Davar).

34. צִוָּה ה' לַעֲשֹׂת — So HASHEM had commanded to be done. This service was to be performed on the first day and repeated on each of the seven inauguration days (Rashi).

35. יוֹמִים וְלַיְלָה שְׁבַע יָמִים — Day and night for a seven-day period. The requirement was not meant literally that they remain at the Tent of Meeting uninterruptedly for a full seven days [since it is obvious that a person is only flesh and blood and

את־משמרת יהוה ולא תמותו בִּי־כֵן צוֹתִי:
 לו וַיַּעַשׂ אֶהֱרֹן וּבָנָיו אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־
 צִוָּה יְהוָה בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה:

צו
ח/לו

must attend to bodily needs (*R' Bachya*)). Rather the commandment was that they must remain at the Tent constantly as long as there is a sacrificial service to be done, including the evening hours when the parts are burned on the Altar. As soon as the service is completed, however, they would be free to leave. This requirement was in effect even after the inauguration week was over, for

a Kohen is never permitted to leave in the middle of the service (*Ramban, Sifra*).^[1]

וְלֹא תָמוּתוּ — *So that you will not die.*
 But if you do not obey this command, you shall die (*Rashi*).

36. וַיַּעַשׂ אֶהֱרֹן וּבָנָיו — *Aaron and his sons carried out.* Scripture stresses their total obedience to Moses' command, in order to relate their praise.

1. These seven days began on 23 Adar. To the Kohanim who were thus confined to the Courtyard, this week served as a mourning period for Nadav and Avihu — who were to die seven days later, on Rosh Chodesh Nissan (10:1-2) — just as God Himself mourned for seven days before He destroyed His world (*Tanchuma, Shemini* 1). God's seven days of mourning were the seven days that He waited before beginning the deluge that erased all life in the time of Noah (*Genesis* 7:1). The Midrash wonders: Can someone mourn the dead before they die? The Midrash explains: Only human beings cannot do so, because they cannot know what will occur, but God, Who knows what will happen, could grieve over His world that was about to be destroyed. Here, too, knowing that Nadav and Avihu would die, God decreed that Aaron and his sons should isolate themselves for seven days, tantamount to mourning. [Presumably, the reason for this premature mourning period was that Aaron and his surviving two sons would be forbidden to be in mourning after the death because they were the only surviving Kohanim and they had to carry on the sacrificial service (10:6).]

HASHEM's charge so that you will not die; for so have I been commanded.

³⁶ Aaron and his sons carried out all the matters that HASHEM commanded through Moses.

They did not turn to the right or to the left. [The commandments were many and their details voluminous, but they neither deviated nor erred (*Gur Aryeh*)] (*Rashi*).^[1]

Sifra comments that the verse comes to praise Aaron and his sons for doing the service with great joy, as if they had been commanded directly by God. *Gur Aryeh* explains that great people tend to feel resentment when they must obey the

instructions of a contemporary, but Aaron had no such feelings. He performed the service with complete selflessness.

According to the Masoretic note appearing at the end of the *Sidrah*, there are 96 verses in the *Sidrah*, numerically corresponding to the mnemonic צו [command]. This alludes to commandments and our obedience to them. (According to the punctuation in our standard texts of the Chumash, however, *Tzav* contains 97 verses. See comm. to 11:43 on possible variations of punctuation.) The *Haf-tarah* begins with *Jeremiah* 7:21.

נשלם סדרה צו בעזרת האל

1. Would anyone dream that Aaron would not scrupulously carry out God's command? In a humorous vein, *Chasam Sofer* comments that the key words of *Rashi's* comment are that he turned neither to the right nor to the left. Generally, when people are given a great honor, they shrug their shoulders right and left, as if to display modesty — because it is becoming to behave that way. But Aaron showed no false modesty. If it was God's wish that he perform the service, he did it without hesitation.

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סדר שמיני

Sidrah Shemini

שמיני ט-א-ב
 א וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי קָרָא מֹשֶׁה לְאַהֲרֹן וּלְבָנָיו
 ב וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן קַח-לֶךָ
 עֹגֶל בֶּן-בָּקָר לְחֻטָּאת וְאַיִל לְעֹלָה תְּמִימִם

IX

§ The Priestly Service Begins

At the end of the previous *Sidrah* we are told that Aaron and his sons were instructed to remain at the Tent of Meeting for seven full days while Moses performed the inauguration service. These services began on the twenty-third of Adar. Each day for seven days, Moses erected the Tabernacle, performed the entire service himself, and disassembled the Tabernacle when the service was done. Those seven days climaxed with the consecration of Aaron and his sons as Kohanim. From that moment onward, only Kohanim were eligible to perform the Tabernacle service. This chapter begins on the first day of Nissan, the "eighth day" from the beginning of the inauguration services. On that day, the Tabernacle was erected permanently and the Kohanim assumed their new role. This *Sidrah* gives the special inauguration service that the newly consecrated Kohanim performed on the day they achieved their new status.^[1]

Ramban explains that the seven-day inauguration service served only to purify and sanctify the Tabernacle. In this he disagrees with *Rashi* (*Exodus* 29:1), who holds that the inauguration service had the [additional] purpose of atoning for the sin of the Golden Calf. Ramban, however, holds that only the eighth-day offerings of this chapter came to atone for the Golden Calf — which is why Aaron's offering and one of the national offerings came from the cattle family. In addition, the people brought a he-goat to atone for the sin of Jacob's sons who sold Joseph and then slaughtered a he-goat to hide their deed from their father (*Genesis* 37:31-32). A further significance of these offerings was that they came on the first day that the Kohanim performed the Tabernacle service, so that they were required to bring an inauguration offering, like all Kohanim on their first day of service (see 6:13-14).

1. וּלְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל — *And the elders of*

1. Rosh Chodesh Nissan is the anniversary of ten major events: (1) the first day of Creation; (2) the first in the order of months, since Nissan is counted as the first month; (3) the first day that the tribal leaders brought their offerings in honor of the new Tabernacle (*Numbers* ch. 7); (4) the first day that the Kohanim performed the service; (5) the beginning of the regular sacrificial service, including the communal offerings; (6) the first day that Heavenly fire consumed the offerings on the Altar; (7) the first day that sacrificial meat was eaten [during the seven days of Moses' priesthood, the entire animals were burned]; (8) the first day that it was prohibited to bring offerings on private altars [בָּמֹת]; (9) the first day that the Divine Presence [*Shechinah*] rested upon Israel [*Exodus* 25:8 implies that the *Shechinah* would rest upon the people only when they had the Tabernacle]; and (10) the first day that the Priestly Blessing was pronounced upon the Jewish people (*Seder Olam*; *Shabbos* 87a).

The Sages teach that the word נָחַי always indicates that trouble or grief is associated with

It was on the eighth day, Moses summoned Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel. ²He said to Aaron: Take yourself a young bull for a sin-offering and a ram for an elevation-offering — unblemished;

Israel. Although the command to bring the offerings listed below was addressed only to Aaron, Moses wanted the elders to hear for themselves that Aaron had been elevated to the office of Kohen Gadol by God, and had not seized it for himself (Rashi).

Although Moses had shown the people previously that Aaron was God's choice (8:5), it was necessary for him to show the people now that Aaron would not begin the actual performance of the service without being explicitly commanded to do so (Gur Aryeh).

There are other explanations of why Moses summoned the elders: — They were the representatives of the nation, so that Moses' command to the people, in verse 3, was given through the elders (Ramban). — Aaron was to instruct them regarding the communal offerings, which had to be purchased from community funds and which were brought on behalf of the entire nation collectively (Shem Olam). — The communal offerings of this chapter, which atoned for the Golden Calf, are similar to the sin-offering of 4:13-21.

Consequently, three elders were required to lean [קמיקה] on it (Kli Yakar).

2. קָזַח — Take. Although we are not told explicitly that God commanded this order of sacrifices, Moses said later (v. 6) that God had given him this command. These offerings were in the nature of the offerings that Kohanim bring on their first day of service (Ramban).

עֵגֶל בֶּן־בָּקָר — A young bull. God chose a calf for Aaron's offering to symbolize that he had been forgiven for his role in the sin of the Golden Calf (Rashi). The word עֵגֶל, calf, refers to the young of cattle in the first year of its life; the addition of the term בֶּן־בָּקָר, lit. son of cattle, means that it must be in the second year of its life (Rosh Hashanah 10a). Without these limitations, cattle may be used for offerings until they are three years old (see Kesef Mishneh, Maaseh HaKorbanos 1:14).

Why was a bull chosen for Aaron's sin-offering? God wished to show that by means of this bull offering, Aaron would be forgiven for his role in the sin of the Golden

the narrative. What sadness could there have been on that joyous first day of Nissan? The people had a premonition that tragedy was imminent — and, indeed, Nadav and Avihu died that day, as related in 10:2 (R' Shlomo Kluger).

To the above question, R' Yisroel of Rizhin notes Sforno's comment that until the sin of the Golden Calf, there was no need for a center of holiness; every Jew was to be worthy of the Divine Presence. After that calamitous national downfall, it became necessary to build a Tabernacle as a resting place for the Shechinah. If so, it was truly sad that the Tabernacle was dedicated, because mixed with the joy was the realization that the people had forfeited their opportunity for even greater holiness.

ג וַיִּקְרָב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְאֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּדְבֹּר
 לֵאמֹר קָחוּ שְׁעִיר-עִזִּים לְחַטָּאת וְעֹגֶל
 ד וּבָכֶשֶׂת בְּנֵי-שָׁנָה תְּמִימִם לְעֹלָה: וְשׁוֹר וְאַיִל
 לְשִׁלְמִים לְזִבְחֵ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וּמִנְחָה בָלֹלָה
 ה בַּשָּׁמֶן כִּי הַיּוֹם יִהְיֶה נִרְאָה אֲלֵיכֶם: וַיִּקְחוּ
 אֶת אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה מֹשֶׁה אֶל-פְּנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
 ו וַיִּקְרְבוּ כָל-הָעֵדָה וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וַיֹּאמֶר
 מֹשֶׁה זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה תַּעֲשׂוּ וַיֵּרָא
 ו אֲלֵיכֶם כְּבוֹד יְהוָה: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן
 קָרֵב אֶל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת-חַטָּאתְךָ וְאֶת-
 עֹלֹתְךָ וְכִפֹּר בְּעֶדְךָ וּבְעֶד הָעָם וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת-

Calf (*Rashi*)^[1]

The numerical value of עֹגֶל בֶּן בָּקָר is equal to that of לִכְפֹּר חַטַּאת הָעֹגֶל, to atone for the sin of the calf (*Baal HaTurim*).

3. תִּדְבֹּר — *Speak*. The verse does not specify who was commanded to make this statement to the Children of Israel. *Ramban* offers three alternatives: (a) The honor was given to Aaron in order to enhance his prestige; (b) Moses directed the command to everyone present, both Aaron and the elders. He spoke in the singular because each of them was to bear individual responsibility for conveying the demand to the people; (c) the

command was directed individually to each of the elders.

4. ה' נִרְאָה — *HASHEM appears*. You are obligated to bring these offerings, because thanks to them God will rest His Presence upon your handiwork (*Rashi*). The greater degree of *Shechinah* that their offerings would bring about was manifested by the Heavenly fire (v. 24, *Rashbam*).

God's glory had already filled the Tabernacle to such a degree that even Moses could not enter (*Exodus* 40:34-35), therefore you should honor Him by bringing an offering to Him (*Sforno* to v. 1).

1. Aaron and the people both brought offerings from cattle: Aaron's was a young bull for a sin-offering, and the people's was a calf for an elevation-offering (v. 3). Presumably both were in atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf — why did one bring a sin- and the other an elevation-offering? A sin-offering atones for a sinful deed, and an elevation-offering atones for sinful thoughts. Aaron's share in that calamity was in deed only, because he threw the gold into the fire to fashion the idol (*Exodus* 32:4), but he did not sin in his heart because he did not believe in the power of the idol. To the contrary, his sole intention was to buy time until Moses would return and the people would come back to their senses. But the people sinned in their hearts because they truly thought that the idol had godly powers. Therefore, the offerings of Aaron and the people reflected the natures of their respective sins; Aaron's for deed and the people's for intent (*Kli Yakar*).

and offer them before HASHEM.³ And to the Children of Israel speak as follows: Take a he-goat for a sin-offering, and a calf and a sheep in their first year — unblemished — for an elevation-offering.⁴ And a bull and a ram for a peace-offering to slaughter before HASHEM, and a meal-offering mixed with oil; for today HASHEM appears to you.

⁵ They took what Moses had commanded to the front of the Tent of Meeting; the entire assembly approached and stood before HASHEM.⁶ Moses said: This is the thing that HASHEM has commanded you to do; then the glory of HASHEM will appear to you.

⁷ Moses said to Aaron: Come near to the Altar and perform the service of your sin-offering and your elevation-offering and effect atonement for yourself and for the people; then perform the service of the

5. וַיִּקְרְבוּ כָל-הָעֵדָה — The entire assembly approached. The people had not been instructed to approach, but when they realized that God was ready to accept their offerings in atonement for their sins, they gathered eagerly and joyously (Sifra).

6. וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה זֶה הַדָּבָר — Moses said: This is the thing. Moses was addressing those who had assembled at the Tent of Meeting. The commentators differ regarding what Moses was commanding them to do: — The people should perform the sacrificial service on the animals that they had prepared, as set forth in verses 2-5 (Ramban to v. 2). According to Rashi (v. 23), too, Moses was referring to this service. He said this to reassure the people that the glory

of HASHEM would appear to them this day as a result of Aaron's performance of the service for the first time.

Moses was instructing them that they were to lean [סְמִיכָה] on the offering (Sforno).

7. קָרַב — Come near. Aaron was overawed, and ashamed to approach the Altar [because of his role in making the Golden Calf]. Moses encouraged him, saying, "Why are you ashamed? It is for this [to fill the position of High Priest] that you have been chosen!" (Rashi).^[1]

וְנִבְעַר הָעָם — And for the people. Indirectly, Aaron's personal offering was an atonement for the people as well, because one cannot atone for others unless he is himself free from

1. Degel Machaneh Ephraim comments homilectically, "It is precisely because you possess the attribute of shame that you have been chosen; God despises the haughty."

קָרְבַּן הָעֵם וּכְפָר בְּעֶלְמָם כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה:
ח וַיִּקְרַב אֶהֱרֹן אֶל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיִּשְׁחֹט אֶת-עֹגֶל
ט הַחֹטְאֹת אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ: וַיִּקְרְבוּ בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן אֶת-
הַדָּם אֵלָיו וַיִּטְבֹּל אֶצְבָּעוֹ בָּדָם וַיִּתֵּן עַל-
קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת-הַדָּם יָצַק אֶל-יָסוֹד
י הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְאֶת-הַחֹלֶב וְאֶת-הַכִּלְיֹת וְאֶת-
הַיִּתְרֹת מִן-הַכֹּבֵד מִן-הַחֹטְאֹת הַקָּטִיר
יא הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: וְאֶת-
הַבֶּשֶׂר וְאֶת-הָעוֹר שָׂרָף בָּאֵשׁ מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה:
יב וַיִּשְׁחֹט אֶת-הָעֵלָה וַיִּמְצְאוּ בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן אֵלָיו
יג אֶת-הַדָּם וַיִּזְרְקוּהוּ עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְאֶת-
הָעֵלָה הִמְצִיאוּ אֵלָיו לִנְתֻחֶיהָ וְאֶת-הָרָאשׁ
יד וַיִּקְטֹר עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וַיִּרְחֹץ אֶת-הַקָּרֶב
וְאֶת-הַכְּרָעִים וַיִּקְטֹר עַל-הָעֵלָה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ:

sin (*Bava Metzia* 107b). Only then could Aaron bring the communal offerings listed in verse 3 (*Ibn Ezra*).

8. אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ — *His own*. Aaron's personal atonement offering had to be purchased with his own funds (*Ibn Ezra*).

9. וַיִּקְרְבוּ — *Brought*. [While Aaron completed the slaughter, one of his sons received the blood in a vessel and held it in readiness. When Aaron was ready to perform the blood service at the top of the Altar, they brought it to him.]

The service in verses 9-10 is the standard sin-offering service given in 4:25-26. See commentary there.

10. הַקָּטִיר — *He caused to go up in*

smoke. As yet there was no fire on the Altar. The permanent fire did not begin to burn until the Heavenly fire came down (v. 24) and consumed the sacrificial parts. Thus, the intent of the term in our verse is that Aaron placed it on the pyre so that it would be there, ready for the Heavenly fire to burn (*Rashbam* to v. 17; *Haamek Davar*).

11. שָׂרָף — *He burned*. Ordinarily the only sin-offerings that were burned outside the camp were חֹטְאֹת חִטָּיִת, sin-offerings whose blood was sprinkled inside the Sanctuary (4:1-21; 16:27). The only exceptions to this rule were this and the sin-offerings of the seven inauguration days, which were burned even

9 people's offering and effect atonement for them, as
8-14 HASHEM has commanded.

⁸ Aaron came near to the Altar, and slaughtered the sin-offering calf that was his own. ⁹ The sons of Aaron brought the blood to him. He dipped his finger into the blood and placed it upon the corners of the Altar, and he poured the blood upon the foundation of the Altar. ¹⁰ The fats, the kidneys, and the diaphragm with the liver of the sin-offering, he caused to go up in smoke on the Altar, as HASHEM had commanded Moses. ¹¹ The flesh and the hide he burned in fire outside the camp. ¹² He slaughtered the elevation-offering; the sons of Aaron presented the blood to him and he threw it upon the Altar, all around. ¹³ They presented the elevation-offering to him in its pieces with the head; and he caused it to go up in smoke on the Altar. ¹⁴ He washed the innards and the feet, and caused them to go up in smoke on the elevation-offering on the Altar.

though the entire blood service was on the outer Altar (Rashi).^[1]

12. וַיִּקְרָא — Presented. In both this verse and in verse 9, Aaron's sons gave him the blood, but here they presented it and in verse 9 they brought it to him. Our verse speaks of the elevation-offering, whose blood service was performed by the Kohen while he stood on the Courtyard floor. Thus, his sons merely had to hand — present — the vessel to him. But verse 9 deals with the sin-offering, whose blood service

was done by a Kohen standing on top of the Altar. Thus, his sons went up the ramp to bring him the blood (Meshech Chochmah).

סָבִיב — All around. [See comm. to 1:5.]

13. לְנִתְחֶיהָ — In its pieces. While Aaron was performing the blood service, his sons flayed and cut the elevation-offering into its prescribed parts (see comm. to 1:6, 8). Then they brought the parts up to the Altar, where Aaron tossed them onto the pyre.

1. Why indeed were these offerings completely burned? These offerings came, at least in part, to atone for Aaron's sin of the Golden Calf. By commanding that everything, even the hide, be burned so that not a trace of them would remain, God intimated to the Jewish people that Aaron's sin was forgiven — totally (Sifsei Cohen).

טו וַיִּקְרַב אֶת קָרְבַּן הָעֶם וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁעִיר
הַחֲטָאתָ אֲשֶׁר לָעָם וַיִּשְׁחֲטֵהוּ וַיִּשְׁחֲטֵהוּ
טז כָּרֵאשׁוֹן: וַיִּקְרַב אֶת־הָעֵלָה וַיַּעֲשֶׂה כַּמִּשְׁפָּט:
שני יז וַיִּקְרַב אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה וַיִּמְלֵא כַּפּוֹ מִמֶּנָּה וַיִּקְטֹר
יח עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִלֶּבֶד עַל־תְּלַת הַבֹּקֶר: וַיִּשְׁחֹט אֶת־
הַשּׁוֹר וְאֶת־הָאֵיל זָבַח הַשְּׁלָמִים אֲשֶׁר לָעָם
וַיִּמְצְאוּ בְנֵי אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֶת־הַדָּם אֵלָיו וַיִּזְרְקוּהוּ
יט עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְאֶת־הַחֲלָבִים מִן־הַשּׁוֹר
וּמִן־הָאֵיל הָאֵלֶּה וְהַמִּכְסָּה וְהַכְּלִית וַיִּתֵּרֶת
כ הַכֹּבֶד: וַיִּשִּׂימוּ אֶת־הַחֲלָבִים עַל־הַחֲזוֹת
כא וַיִּקְטֹר הַחֲלָבִים הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְאֵת הַחֲזוֹת וְאֵת
שוק הַיָּמִין הַנִּיף אֹהֶל תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
כב בְּאֶשֶׁר צִוָּה מֹשֶׁה: וַיֵּשָׂא אֹהֶל אֶת־יָדוֹ אֶל־

15. — *As for the first one.* I.e., the same service as that of Aaron's sin-offering bull (*Rashi*). The comparison of the goat to the bull (the *first one*) refers only to the slaughter and [blood] service mentioned previously. Aaron's sin-offering, however, was burned completely (v. 11), but the flesh of the people's offering was eaten by the Kohanim, like that of ordinary sin-offerings (*Malbim*).

16. — *As prescribed.* I.e., the regulation of all such offerings, as set forth in chapter 1 (*Rashi*).

17. — *Filled his hand.* I.e., *kemitzah*, as described in 2:2 (*Rashi*).

מִלֶּבֶד עַל־תְּלַת הַבֹּקֶר — *Aside from the morning elevation-offering.* The first

offering of every day must be the morning *tamid*, the daily continual elevation-offering. All the above-mentioned offerings followed that one (*Rashi*).

19. — *As for the fats ... the covering fats.* According to *Rashi* as explained by *Gur Aryeh*, the fats at the beginning of the verse refers to all the sacrificial fats of both offerings, the bull and the ram. The *קִכְסָה*, *covering fats*, refers only to the layer of fat that covered the stomach. It is mentioned separately because it is a proper noun that refers to only one particular layer of fat, that covering the stomach. [The tail is mentioned separately, because the only tail that was offered was that of the ram, and because it is שֶׁוֹמֵן, fat that

9 ¹⁵ He brought near the offering of the people. He took
15-22 the sin-offering goat that was for the people, and
 slaughtered it and performed the sin-offering service, as
 for the first one. ¹⁶ He brought near the elevation-offering
 and performed its service as prescribed. ¹⁷ He
 brought near the meal-offering, filled his hand from it,
 and caused it to go up in smoke on the Altar; aside from
 the morning elevation-offering. ¹⁸ He slaughtered the
 bull and the ram — the people's feast peace-offering.
 The sons of Aaron presented the blood to him, which he
 threw on the Altar, all around. ¹⁹ As for the fats from
 the bull and from the ram, and the tail, the covering fats,
 the kidneys, and the diaphragm with the liver, ²⁰ they
 placed the fats upon the breasts, and caused the fats to
 go up in smoke on the Altar. ²¹ Aaron had lifted up the
 breasts and the right thigh as a waving before HASHEM,
 as Moses had commanded.

²² Aaron raised his hands toward the people and

may be eaten. The other parts must
 be mentioned because they are not
 fats.]

20. הָחֹזֶת — *The breasts.* I.e., the
 breasts of the bull and ram, and the
 right thigh of each (*Ibn Ezra*).

22-24. Aaron's Blessing and the Divine Presence

Having completed his first day of
 sacrificial service, Aaron joyously
 blessed the people, pronouncing Bir-

cas Kohanim, the Priestly Blessings,
 for the very first time.^[1] Aaron and
 the people expected the *Shechinah*,
 the Divine Presence, to rest upon
 their handiwork at that moment—
 but it did not! Thereupon, he and
 Moses prayed, and God responded.

22. וַיִּשָּׂא אֶהָרִין אֶת-יָדָיו — *Aaron raised
 his hands.* In accordance with the
 rule that the Kohanim always raise
 their hands when they bless the
 people (*Sotah* 38a).

1. Upon completing the service, Aaron had an overpowering desire to bless the people, for
 such is the generous and loving nature of Aaron and his descendants. In reward, God gave
 the Kohanim the eternal commandment of conferring the Priestly Blessings upon the
 Jewish people (*Sfas Emes*). Indeed, the *Imrei Emes* notes that the Kohanim are never
 directly commanded to bless Israel; instead the Priestly Blessings are introduced with the
 instruction לְבַרְכּוֹ בְּהָתְכֶם, *So shall you bless* (*Numbers* 6:23). The phrase implies that Aaron and
 his sons did not have to be *ordered* to bless their brethren, but that it is something they would
 want to do of their own accord. What they had to be taught was only the proper text of the
 blessing.

שמיני
ט/כג-כד
הָעָם וַיְבָרְכֵם וַיֵּרֶד מִעֲשֵׂת הַחֹטָאת וְהָעֹלָה
כג וְהַשְׁלָמִים: וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
וַיֵּצְאוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת-הָעָם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד-יְהוָה אֶל-
שלישי כד כָּל-הָעָם: וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל
על-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת-הָעֹלָה וְאֶת-הַחֲלָבִים וַיֵּרָא
א י/א כָּל-הָעָם וַיִּרְאוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם: וַיִּקְחוּ בָנֵי-
אֹהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא אִישׁ מִחֶתֶתוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ בָהֶן

וַיְבָרְכֵם — And blessed them. He pronounced the Priestly Blessings (*Rashi*). Although these blessings were not yet recorded in the Torah — they are found in *Numbers* 6:24-27 — they had already been taught to Moses, who, in turn, taught them to Aaron.

וַיֵּרֶד — And he descended. He descended from the Altar, upon which he had been standing (*Rashi*).

23. וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן — *Moses and Aaron came*. Why did they enter the Tent of Meeting? *Rashi*, quoting *Sifra*, offers two alternatives: (a) Moses was teaching Aaron how to burn the קטורת, incense, on the Inner Altar. (b) When Aaron saw that the *Shechinah* had not rested upon the Tabernacle despite the long inauguration service, he was distraught and blamed himself, saying, "I know that God is angry with me [because of the sin of the Golden Calf], and it is because of me that the *Shechinah* has not rested upon Israel." He turned to Moses and said, "Moses, my brother, what have you done to me that you had me enter [i.e., embark upon the Divine service] and be humiliated!" Immediately Moses entered [the Tent of Meeting]

with him and they prayed for mercy—and the *Shechinah* rested upon Israel.

וַיְבָרְכוּ — And they blessed. When the Jewish people saw that after seven days of Moses' service and one day of Aaron's, the *Shechinah* had still not rested upon their Tabernacle, they, too, were anguished. They exclaimed, "Moses, our teacher, we have gone to so much effort to bring the *Shechinah* among us as proof that we have been forgiven for the Golden Calf!" Moses responded, "My brother Aaron is worthier than I. When he performs the service the *Shechinah* will rest upon you." When that took place, thus publicly establishing Aaron's greatness, the brothers gave their blessing that the *Shechinah* would never depart from Israel, saying: "May the pleasantness of my Lord, our God, be upon us— our handiwork may he establish for us; our handiwork may He establish" (*Psalms* 90:17).

24. וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי ה' — A fire went forth from before *HASHEM*. The fire came down like a pillar from heaven to earth (*Sifra*). It went into the Holy of Holies and from there it went out to the Golden Altar and then to the

9 blessed them; and he descended from having performed
23-24 the sin-offering, the elevation-offering, and the peace-offering.²³ Moses and Aaron came to the Tent of Meeting, and they went out and they blessed the people — and the glory of HASHEM appeared to the entire people!

²⁴ A fire went forth from before HASHEM and consumed the elevation-offering and the fats upon the Altar; the people saw and sang glad song and fell upon their faces.

10 The sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, each took
1 his fire pan, they put fire in them and placed

Outer Altar, causing the incense and the sacrificial parts to go up in smoke (Rashbam).

וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל-פְּנֵיהֶם — *And fell upon their faces.* In addition to the miracle of the fire, the people noted the miracle that the entire nation was in the tiny fifty-cubit-square area of the Courtyard, but there was room for every-

one. They fell to their hands and knees in awe and gratitude — and everyone had four cubits of space for himself! Thereupon, the spirit of holiness came upon them and they sang out in praise of God (Yalkut, Parshas Pekudei §402).

The people prayed that God's Presence would remain upon the Tabernacle (*Haamek Davar*).

X

17. The Death of Nadav and Avihu

Just when the joy of the inauguration ritual had reached its peak, tragedy struck. Aaron's two oldest sons performed an unauthorized service and lost their lives. [The nature of their sin will be discussed below.] The behavior of Moses and Aaron in the face of this grievous loss gave further testimony to their greatness and brought about a new sanctification of HASHEM's Name.

The Sages and the commentators offer a wide range of interpretations regarding the actual deed of Nadav and Avihu and regarding the reason

for their death. The fact that they sinned need not in itself have been enough to justify the Heavenly death penalty; they could have been punished in a variety of ways short of death. As Moses told Aaron, their death served a great cause. In the course of the commentary, we will attempt to cite briefly the major opinions of the primary commentators, and the footnote to verse 2 will summarize a perspective on the underlying flaw that caused Nadav and Avihu to err.

בְּנֵי-אַהֲרֹן — *The sons of Aaron.* They were Aaron's sons, but they slighted him by acting on their own,

אֲשׁ וְשִׁימוּ עָלֶיהָ קֶטֶרֶת וַיִּקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 בִּשְׁמֵי אֲשֶׁר לֹא צָוָה אֹתָם: וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ
 מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

without consulting him. The Sages cite this lack of consultation as a major factor in their sin. Later, the verse alludes to this again: וַיִּקְחוּ, [they] took, is in the plural, but אִישׁ מִזֹּתָתוֹ, each... his fire pan, is in the singular. This teaches that the two of them did not even consult each other. They both had the same idea, but they acted independently, without discussing the matter with one another (*Sifra*).

עָלֶיהָ — Upon it. The term is in the singular, stressing that they put the incense upon the fire, rather than upon the pans. This implies that their sin was in bringing unauthorized fire, not that they brought unbidden pans of incense (*Or HaChaim*).

וַיִּקְרִיבוּ — And they brought. There are three opinions regarding the nature of this incense and where they burned it:

(a) They brought the incense into the Holy of Holies, where even the Kohen Gadol may enter only on Yom Kippur (*Sifra*). Most commentators follow this view, based on the fact that God mentioned their sin to introduce the warning that no one may enter the Holy of Holies except for the Kohen Gadol in his performance of the Yom Kippur incense service (see *Rashi*, 16:2; *Ibn Ezra* 16:1).

[According to the above view, their service in itself was sinful, because no such service had ever existed. According to the following two views, their deed would not seem to be a sin. Why it was wrong

will be explained below.]

(b) *Ramban* (16:2) and *R' Bachya*, however, contend that it is inconceivable that Nadav and Avihu would have done something that even their father had not been commanded or authorized to do, as yet. It should be borne in mind that at that time, the only commandment ever given regarding incense was that it should be offered twice daily on the Golden Altar, which is in the Sanctuary, outside the Holy of Holies. It is unlikely, therefore, that Nadav and Avihu would take it upon themselves to enter the holiest part of the Sanctuary. What they did was to offer the regular daily incense upon the Inner Altar (*Ramban*, *Ravad* to *Sifra*; *Ritva* to *Yoma* 53a).

(c) They offered the incense that had been part of the special inauguration offering brought by Nachshon, the leader of Judah (*Numbers* 7:14). As part of the celebration commemorating the inauguration of the Tent of Meeting and the beginning of the daily sacrificial service, each of the tribal princes brought a special offering, one prince on each of the first twelve days of Nissan. Unlike the regular daily incense, this offering was burned on the Outer Altar (*Tosafos Yeshanim*, *Yoma* 53a).

❖§ Why did Nadav and Avihu Take it upon Themselves to Bring this Irregular Offering?

(a) They saw the great display of love that God showered upon Israel

10 incense upon it; and they brought before HASHEM an
2 alien fire that He had not commanded them.² A fire came forth from before HASHEM and consumed them, and they died before HASHEM.

by sending a heavenly fire to consume the offerings (9:24), so they wished to reciprocate with a display of their own love of God. The incense was their means of doing so (*Sifra*). In a similar vein, *Sforno* comments that they reasoned as follows: The daily *tamid* [continual offering] causes the Divine Presence to rest upon Israel (*Exodus* 29:42), and the *tamid* is followed by the daily incense offering. Since incense is apparently associated with the Divine Presence, it seemed obvious to Nadav and Avihu that the great revelation the nation had just observed should be commemorated by an incense offering.

(b) They prepared their incense not *after* the Heavenly fire, but *before*; thus the first word of the verse, נִקְחוּ, should be rendered *they had taken*. Knowing that there was a commandment to bring fire and incense every day, and seeing that Moses had not issued the command that it be done, they assumed that they should act on their own. Moses, however, had purposely not wanted the incense to be brought as yet. He was awaiting the descent of the Heavenly fire, so that the very first incense would be kin-

dled with God's own fire. That would cause a sanctification of God's Name (*Rashbam*).

אֵשׁ זָרָה — An alien fire. R' Yishmael holds that they used fire from the Altar, but it was *alien* because they had not been bidden to offer it. R' Akiva holds that the fire was literally alien, because it did not come from the Altar. R' Eliezer agrees that the fire was not holy, and adds that their offense was in ruling that it was permissible without asking their teacher Moses [מִוֹרָה הִלְכָהּ בְּפָנֵי רַבָּם] (*Sifra*).

2. וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ — A fire came forth. Why did they die? R' Eliezer says because they rendered a halachic decision in the presence of their teacher Moses without consulting him (*Yoma* 53a, *Rashi*). R' Yishmael says because they drank wine before entering the Sanctuary. [Even though there had as yet been no prohibition against doing so (see v. 9), they should have understood that it was disrespectful to do so] (*Rashi*).^[1]

❖§ The Sins of Nadav and Avihu

In *Midrash Rabbah* and *Midrash Tanchuma* to *Acharei Mos*, a total of

1. Many commentators remark that Nadav and Avihu had exalted intentions when they entered the Tabernacle to perform this forbidden service. Why, then, did they die?

Whenever someone performs a commandment with devotion and ecstasy, his soul should leave him and cleave to God. The only reason such a person remains alive is because God has commanded him to perform the commandment and God wants His commandments to be a source of life and blessing, not death. But in the case of Aaron's sons, their deed was not a *mitzvah*; God had not commanded it, and therefore the commandment could not protect them from death. When their souls left their bodies, there was no merit to restore their lives. This is why the Torah tells us that they brought a fire *that He had not commanded them* (*Chiddushei HaRim*).

ג וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן הוּא אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר
יהוה | לֵאמֹר בְּקִרְבִּי אֶקְדֹּשׁ וְעַל־פְּנֵי כָל־
ד הָעָם אֶכְבֹּד וַיְדַם אַהֲרֹן: וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶל־
מִישָׁאֵל וְאֵל אֶלְצָפָן בְּנֵי עֲזִיזָאֵל בֶּן־אֶהֱרֹן

twelve reasons are given for the death of Aaron's sons. In addition to those cited here by *Rashi*, some of the other reason are: their improper offering; they consulted no one, not even one another; they refused to marry because they felt that no woman was worthy of their august family status; they thought they were so great that God could judge them solely with the attribute of justice, without need for mercy. In the case of such differences of opinion among the Sages, we must assume that the varying viewpoints are different expressions of the same general principle.

As a starting point in finding the unifying principle in all the above reasons, we cite yet another reason as interpreted by the *Chafetz Chaim*:

Nadav and Avihu walked behind Moses and Aaron and said to one another, "These two elders will die and we will lead the community!" It is inconceivable that two men of such stature could speak so despicably. Their true intent was: "Moses and Aaron are elderly; they may die soon and we will be required to succeed them. Who knows if we will be worthy of this responsibility?" Although they meant well, their manner of expression was gross and unbecoming (*comm. to Sifra*).

In the perspective of this comment we can perceive the common denom-

inator of the various sins. They took too much upon themselves: when and how to bring offerings, who would lead Israel, who was worthy of being their mate. And they did it all with a pronounced lack of humility. It was a time when Israel was to submerge its personal desires and interests to those of God as represented by the new Tabernacle as the central point of the nation and by the role of Moses and Aaron as the nation's leaders. In this context, the attitude of Nadav and Avihu, great though they were, was inexcusable and dangerous.

In seeking to understand the sins of Nadav and Avihu, it is necessary to begin with the premise that they were people of extraordinary greatness, as attested by Moses (v. 3). The *Zohar* comments that their death provided atonement not only for their own generation, but for all future generations, as well—such was their exalted stature. But God holds His greatest people to the strictest standards of justice (see *Michtav Me'Eliyahu*, vol. 2).

3. הוא אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר ה' — *Of this did HASHEM speak.* The fire that consumed them was a Divine statement; it was the wordless message of HASHEM's intent (*Ramban*). *Rashi* comments that the deaths were indeed a fulfillment of God's previous word to Moses. In speaking of the Tabernacle, God had said, *it will be*

³ Moses said to Aaron: Of this did HASHEM speak, saying: "I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me, thus I will be honored before the entire people"; and Aaron fell silent.

⁴ Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uziel, and said to them, "Approach,

sanctified through My glory (Exodus 29:43). Moses now told Aaron, "I knew that the Tabernacle would be sanctified through someone in whom God's glory reposes, but I thought it would be one of us. Now I know that they were greater than either of us."

אָכְבֵּר — *I will be honored.* When God imposes strict justice even upon the righteous, He is feared and honored. People say that if such is the fate of the righteous, surely the punishment of the wicked will be much worse (Rashi, Zevachim 115b).

God has told me that His holiness expresses itself in the conduct of those He loves, those who are closest to Him. God says, "I am honored when I see My holiness reflected in them" [see Amos 3:2] (Ibn Ezra).

It is common in human society that powerful or respected people maintain a looser and more permissive standard of behavior than "commoners". In Judaism, this is impermissible. Just the opposite is true. God demands higher standards from His great ones and deals strictly with their lapses.

וַיִּדָּם אַהֲרֹן — *And Aaron fell silent.* Aaron had been weeping loudly, but upon hearing Moses' consolation, he fell silent (Ramban), finding comfort in the knowledge that his sons had sanctified HASHEM's Name (*Sforno*). In reward for his silent acceptance of the Divine decree, Aaron was honored by having the following *mitzvah* (vs. 8-11) addressed to him exclusively (Rashi).^[1]

4. מִיִּשְׁאֵל — *Mishael.* They were Levites as explained below. The brothers of Nadav and Avihu were not to tend to the bodies, an exception to the general rule. This was a *חֻקְאָה שְׁעָרָה*, an extraordinary ruling, because only the Kohen Gadol is forbidden to contaminate himself even to the body of a close relative; ordinary Kohanim are permitted to do so (21:11). In this case, however, the Torah made an exception. In honor of the inauguration, all the Kohanim had to remain pure and eligible to perform the service (Ramban).

בְּנֵי עֲזִיזֶל — *Sons of . . . Uziel.* He was a brother of Amram, the father of

1. Aaron displayed greatness by remaining silent in the face of his heartbreak, but there is even a greater degree of trust in God and acceptance of his judgment. King David said: *So that my soul might sing to You* וְלֹא יִדָּם, *and not be silent, HASHEM my God, forever will I thank You* (Psalms 30:13). David was able to praise God even in the midst of misfortune (Tiferes Shlomo).

The Belzer Rebbe, R' Aharon Rokeach, learned during the Holocaust that his eldest son had been burned alive by the Nazis. He said, "I am grateful that I have had a share in the sacrifice of the Jewish people!"

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם קְרְבוּ שָׂאוּ אֶת־אֲחֵיכֶם מֵאֵת
 הַ פְּנֵי־הַקֹּדֶשׁ אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה: וַיִּקְרְבוּ
 וַיִּשְׂאֵם בְּכַתְנֹתָם אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה בְּאֶשֶׁר
 דִּבֶּר מֹשֶׁה: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־אַהֲרֹן
 וּלְאַלְעָזָר וּלְאִיתָמָר בְּנֵי רָאשֵׁיכֶם אֶל־
 תִּפְרְעוּ וּבְגְדֵיכֶם לֹא־תִפְרְמוּ וְלֹא תִמְתּוּ
 וְעַל כָּל־הָעֵדָה יִקְצֹף וְאֲחֵיכֶם כָּל־בֵּית
 יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכוּ אֶת־הַשְּׂרֵפָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף יְהוָה:
 וּמִפֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא תֵצְאוּ פֶן־תִּמְתּוּ
 כִּי־שֶׁמֶן מִשְׁחַת יְהוָה עָלֵיכֶם וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כַדְבָּר
 מֹשֶׁה:

Moses and Aaron. They were Aaron's cousins, but they were Levites, not Kohanim.

שאו — Carry. Remove the bodies in order not to dampen the celebration. This is like someone who tells his comrade, "Take the corpse, which is being brought to burial, away from the bride, who is going to her *chuppah*" (Rashi, *Kesubos* 17a).

אֶל־מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה — To the outside of the camp. Where their priestly vestments were removed and they were buried (Ramban).

Since graves caused טמאה, contamination, to those who walked over them, and the whole encampment had to be kept free of such contamination, all dead were buried outside of the camp. The city of Jerusalem has the same halachic status as the Israelite camp, which is why no burials may take place within the city's boundaries.

5. בְּכַתְנֹתָם — By their tunics. Their bodies and clothing were intact. Two shafts of fire shot out from the Holy of Holies and entered their nostrils, burning out their souls, as it were, but not affecting their bodies (Rashi; *Sanhedrin* 52a). However there is another opinion in *Sifra* that their bodies, too, were burned.

6-7. The Kohanim Shall Not Mourn

6. רָאשֵׁיכֶם אֶל־תִּפְרְעוּ — Do not leave your heads unshorn. The definition of "unshorn" is a thirty-day growth of hair. A Kohen Gadol is forbidden at all times to leave his hair unshorn or to rend his garments (21:10), but ordinary Kohanim have no such prohibition, unless they are performing the service (Rambam, *Bias HaMikdash* 1:8-11). However, in order not to interfere with the joy of the inauguration, God forbade these expressions of grief even to the brothers of Nadav and Avihu.

carry your brothers out of the Sanctuary to the outside of the camp.”⁵ They approached and carried them by their tunics to the outside of the camp, as Moses had spoken.

⁶ Moses said to Aaron and to his sons Elazar and Issamar, “Do not leave your heads unshorn and do not rend your garments that you not die and He become wrathful with the entire assembly; and your brethren the entire House of Israel shall bewail the conflagration that HASHEM ignited.”⁷ Do not leave the entrance of the Tent of Meeting lest you die, for the oil of HASHEM’s anointment is upon you”; and they carried out Moses’ bidding.

From the fact that these instructions had to be given to Elazar and Issamar, the surviving brothers, it is clear that they would otherwise have let their hair grow and rent their garments. From this the Sages infer that these are requirements of mourning (Rashi from *Moed Kattan* 14b). The commentators agree, however, that these requirements of mourning are not Scriptural, but Rabbinic. The Sages use this verse as an *אקמקתא*, a Scripturally implied support for a Rabbinic enactment (Ramban).

ולא תמות — *That you not die.* Kohanim who perform the service in mourning — with long hair or torn garments — are liable to death by God’s hand (Rashi), but their service is not rendered invalid (Rambam, *ibid.*).

כָּל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל — *The entire House of Israel.* The Sages derive from this verse that the suffering of a *talmid chacham* [i.e., the grieving Aaron and his sons] should be shared by all Israel (Rashi).^[1]

7. לֹא תִצָּא — *Do not leave.* This commandment required Aaron and his sons to continue performing the service, despite the fact that they had become mourners. Ordinarily, only the Kohen Gadol is required to remain at his post despite the death of an immediate relative (21:12); other Kohanim are forbidden to perform the service on the day of the death. In honor of the inauguration, however — and because of the uniqueness of Elazar and Issamar in that they were the only ordinary Kohanim ever to be anointed — this extraordinary decree required them, too, to remain at their posts (Ramban).

1. True, a Jew should try to accept God’s justice with faith that it is for the best, as Aaron did and as his sons were commanded to do — but this should not be the case with his friends and neighbors. Other people should mourn and grieve over the misfortunes of a fellow Jew (R’ Shlomo Kluger).

ח"ט וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: יֵין וְשֹׁכָר
 אֶל-תִּשָּׁת׃ אֶתָּה ׀ וּבְנֶיךָ אִתְּךָ בְּבָאֲכֶם
 אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְלֹא תָמְתוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם
 לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: וְלֹהֲבִדִּיל בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין הַחֹל
 יא וּבֵין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטְּהוֹר: וְלִהְיוֹת אֶת-בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת כָּל-הַחֻקִּים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה
 אֲלֵיכֶם בְּיַד-מֹשֶׁה:

8-10. The Commandment to Aaron Against Intoxicants

Aaron was now commanded against performing the service or deciding legal matters while intoxicated. This teaches that the service of God is based not upon ecstasy and emotion, but upon clear understanding and intelligent teaching. Only thereby can people make the often subtle distinctions between the proper and the improper, the required and the forbidden (R' Hirsch).

8. אֶל-אַהֲרֹן — *To Aaron*. As noted above (comm. v. 3), God spoke directly to Aaron in reward for Aaron's silent acceptance of the Heavenly decree. However, *Tosafos* (*Zevachim* 115b) and *Ibn Ezra's* second comment offer a different view. Based on *Sifra* (see comm. 1:2) that all commandments were conveyed to Moses, even when Aaron is mentioned, they interpret that God showed special honor to Aaron by specifying him by name. This means that Moses was to

convey the commandment to Aaron alone, and not to the entire people. According to *Maharsha* (ibid.), this is *Rashi's* intent as well.

9. יֵין וְשֹׁכָר — *Intoxicating wine* [lit. wine and intoxicants]. The translation follows R' Elazar (*Kereisos* 13b) who holds that the phrase is a hendiadys, meaning that the two words modify one another (*Rashi*). [Thus, a Kohen would not be liable to the Heavenly death penalty unless he drank wine, and it was of sufficient strength to intoxicate. But if he drank diluted wine, or even whiskey, he would not be liable.]¹

In addition to the above view of R' Elazar, there are two other tannaitic opinions. The *tanna kamma* (anonymous first *tanna*) holds that יֵין, wine, refers even to unfermented grape juice. If a Kohen performs the service after drinking such a "wine," he is in violation of a negative commandment only, but there is no Heavenly death penalty. That penalty applies only if one drinks שֹׁכָר, intoxicating wine, which has fermented

1. In commenting on this verse, the Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 12:3) cites the verse: *The orders of HASHEM are perfect, gladdening the heart* (Psalms 19:9). Since wine, too, gladdens the heart, shouldn't it be commendable for someone to enhance his service of God through the joy of drinking wine? No! God wants His servants to find the source of their joy in the Torah and the performance of its commandments. A Kohen who enters the Temple is deficient if he fails to find gladness in his service (R' Bunam of P'shis'cha).

10 ⁸ HASHEM spoke to Aaron saying: ⁹ Do not drink
8-11 intoxicating wine, you and your sons with you, when
 you come to the Tent of Meeting, that you not die — this
 is an eternal decree for your generations. ¹⁰ In order to
 distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and
 between the contaminated and the pure, ¹¹ and to teach
 the Children of Israel all the decrees that HASHEM had
 spoken to them through Moses.

for at least forty days and provided he drinks at least a *r'vi'is* [approx. 4-6 fl. oz.]. The third opinion is that of R' Yehudah, who holds that for drinking any sort of wine one is liable to the death penalty, but that there is a negative commandment for any intoxicating beverage, whether or not it is wine (*Kereisos* 13b).

From the fact that this commandment was issued immediately after the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, R' Yishmael infers that their punishment must have been associated with the subject of the commandment. Thus, their sin was that they entered the Sanctuary after having had wine (see comm. to vs. 2-3).

וְלֹא תָמוּתוּ — *That you not die.* The Sages derive that the Heavenly death penalty applies only to an eligible Kohen who actually performed the Temple service after drinking wine. There is no death penalty for merely entering the Courtyard or even the Tabernacle while in such a state (*Ramban*).

10. הָחֵל — *The profane.* The verse begins by saying that a Kohen performing the service must be able to distinguish between the sacred and the profane. From this the Sages derive that if a Kohen performs the service in the forbidden state, his

service is rendered *profane*, i.e., it is invalid (*Rashi*).

11. וְלִחְוֹרֵת — *And to teach.* By speaking of *teaching*, rather than the Temple service, the Torah indicates that it is not only the service that requires a clear mind. Consequently, a person who has imbibed wine is forbidden to render legal judgments, although there is no Heavenly death penalty if he does so (*Rashi*).

12-20. Disposition of the Day's Offerings

On the day a close relative dies, the mourner is known as an *onen*, and the laws governing his status are more stringent than those of the following days. Although the Kohen Gadol is required to perform his Temple service even as an *onen*, other Kohanim are forbidden to do so. The period of the Tabernacle's inauguration was an exception to this rule, in that all Kohanim were required to continue their sacrificial service, but the extent of this dispensation became a matter of controversy between Moses and Aaron in the following passage. The question was this: Were the Kohanim permitted to eat from all the offerings on that day, or were they permitted to eat only

שמיני רביעי יב וַיִּדְבֹּר מִשָּׁה אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-אֱלֻעָזָר וְאֶל-
אֵיתָמָר | בָּנָיו הַנּוֹתָרִים קָחוּ אֶת-הַמִּנְחָה
הַנּוֹתֶרֶת מֵאִשֵּׁי יְהוָה וְאִכְלוּהָ מִצֹּת אֶצֶל
יג הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כִּי קָדֹשׁ קָדָשִׁים הוּא: וְאִכְלָתֶם
אֹתָהּ בַּמָּקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ כִּי חֹק וְחֻק-בְּנֵיךָ הוּא
יד מֵאִשֵּׁי יְהוָה כִּי-כֵן צִוִּיתִי: וְאֵת חֹה הַתְּנוּפָה
וְאֵת | שֹׁק הַתְּרוּמָה תֹאכְלוּ בַּמָּקוֹם טָהוֹר

some of the offerings, as explained below?

The answer to this question would vary with the nature of the offering, because two kinds of offerings were brought on that day. Some of the offerings were קָרְשֵׁי שְׁעָה, or offerings that were brought exclusively for that occasion, and would never again be repeated, while others were קָרְשֵׁי יְדוּרוֹת, or offerings that were part of the regular Tabernacle service, and would be brought in the future, as well. Moses had commanded that the meal-offering be eaten (v. 12), but did this command extend to other offerings as well? Logic might dictate that the mourning Kohanim were to eat only the offerings that could never be brought again, because they were similar to the meal-offerings. At the very least, the special nature of those one-time offerings would dictate that a law that relates to offerings of all generations would not necessarily apply to the special offerings of that day.

Among the day's offerings, the Rosh Chodesh offering, which, by definition, would be brought monthly for as long as the nation had an Altar, was *kodshei doros*, offer-

ings that would be brought always. The *kodshei sha'ah*, or one-time offerings of the day, were the special princely offering of Nachshon ben Aminadav (see below), and the special offerings of the inauguration.

12. בָּנָיו הַנּוֹתָרִים — *His remaining sons*. [The use of the term נֹתָרִים — instead of נִשְׁאָרִים — implies that they were unworthy of survival, that they should have been destroyed like their brothers.] As a result of Aaron's sin in making the Golden Calf, it was decreed that all of his children would die (*Deuteronomy* 9:20), but Moses prayed for them. Prayer accomplishes the cancellation of half of a decree, thus only two of Aaron's sons died, and Elazar and Issamar remained alive (*Rashi, Vayikra Rabbah* 10:5). The Talmud (*Yoma* 87a) attributes their survival to the merit of Aaron himself, not to Moses' prayer.

[Adults are punished only for their own sins, not for those of their parents; therefore, Aaron's sons could not have been condemned to death because of Aaron's sin alone. Rather, the sin of Aaron resulted in the loss of sufficient merit to save them in the face of their own serious transgres-

10 ¹² *Moses spoke to Aaron and to Elazar and Issamar, his remaining sons, "Take the meal-offering that is left from the fire-offerings of HASHEM, and eat it unleavened near the Altar; for it is the most holy. ¹³ You shall eat it in a holy place, for it is your portion and the portion of your sons from the fire-offerings of HASHEM, for so have I been commanded. ¹⁴ And the breast of the waving and the thigh of the raising-up are you to eat in a pure place, you and*

sions or shortcomings. Therefore, it was decreed before God that if Aaron's sons were to commit such sins, they would not be saved from the death penalty, even though they or Aaron might have enough merits for them to be spared. Even so, had it not been for the principle that God is extremely strict with the most righteous (see comm. v. 3), even Nadav and Avihu would not have died.]

קָחוּ אֶת-הַמִּנְחָה — *Take the meal-offering.* Although *onenim* are ordinarily forbidden to eat offerings, Moses informed the mourners of God's command that this day should be an exception.

This directive referred to the two special meal-offerings that were brought that day: (a) The meal-offering of Nachshon (*Numbers* 7:13). As mentioned above, the tribal princes brought special offerings in celebration of the Inauguration of the Tabernacle. The prince who brought his offering on Rosh Chodesh Nissan was Nachshon ben Aminadav of Judah. Part of his offering was a meal-offering. (b) **מִנְחַת שְׁמִינִי**, the meal-offering of the eighth day (9:4), which was brought in honor of that

day. Each of the two above meal-offerings — that of Nachshon and that of the eighth day — had the service of most meal-offerings: The Kohen scooped out a part to be burned on the Altar and the rest was to be eaten by the Kohanim (*Rashi*).

There were other meal-offerings, as well, but they were not affected by this command, because they were completely burned on the Altar. They were the **נִסְכִּים**, the meal-offerings that accompany all communal and personal animal offerings (see *Numbers* 15:1-16, and Introduction).

בְּמָקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ — *In a holy place.* Since these meal-offerings had the status of *most holy* (v.12), they had to be eaten in the Courtyard of the Tabernacle.

בְּמָקוֹם טָהוֹר — *In a pure place.* The breast and thigh, because they came from peace-offerings (9:3 and 9:18-21), are of a lower degree of holiness [*kodoshim kalim*]; consequently they may be eaten anywhere in the camp. The camp was called "pure" because persons with the contamination of *tzaraas* had to leave it [13:4] (*Rashi*).

אֹתָהּ וּבָנֶיהָ וּבְנֹתֶיהָ אֲתָךְ כִּי־חֻקָּהּ וְחֻק־בָּנֶיהָ
 טו נָתַנּוּ מִזִּבְחֵי שְׁלָמֵי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: שׁוֹק
 הַתְּרוּמָה וְחֹזֶה הַתְּנוּפָה עַל אֲשֵׁי הַחֲלָבִים
 יָבִיאוּ לַהֲנִיף תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְהִזָּה לָךְ
 וּלְבָנֶיךָ אֲתָךְ לְחֻק־עוֹלָם בְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה:
 וְאֵת | שְׁעִיר הַחֹטָאת דֶּרֶשׁ דֶּרֶשׁ מֹשֶׁה וְהִנֵּה

חמישי טו

And your sons and your daughters. Offerings are divided only among Kohanim who are eligible to perform the service, but in the case of offerings of lesser sanctity, which may be eaten outside of the Courtyard, the Kohen shares the meat with his children (*Rashi*).

15. — Upon the fire-offering fats. See comm. to 7:30.

16²⁰. The Dispute Between Moses and Aaron

Three he-goats were offered as sin-offerings that day. One was Nachshon's and one was for the inauguration of the Tabernacle (9:3) — both of the above were *kodshei sha'ah*, which would never be offered again — and the third he-goat was the sin-offering of Rosh Chodesh (*Numbers* 28:15). Previously, Moses had instructed the Kohanim that they should eat the meal-offerings, both of which were *kodshei sha'ah*, and the Kohanim had done so. As noted above, that was an exception to the general rule, because even a Kohen Gadol who may serve as an *onen* may not eat offerings as an *onen*. The question facing Aaron and his sons was whether Moses' command regarding the meal-offerings should apply to the meat of the sin-offerings, as well.

And if it *did* apply, should it apply to all three of them?

This was a case where God had issued a command to Moses that the Kohanim should eat despite their *onen* status, but it remained for Moses and/or Aaron to interpret the circumstances to which the command applied. An analogy might be a law of the Sabbath, where the broad principle is found in the Torah as explained in the Oral Law, but where these teachings must be applied to specific situations. In this case, Moses had told the Kohanim to eat the *kodshei sha'ah*-meal-offerings. He thought that the command should also apply to all the offerings, including *kodshei doros*, and that the Kohanim should eat all the sin-offerings, including the he-goat of Rosh Chodesh. Aaron, however, reasoned that these two kinds of offerings were not comparable; he held that since Moses' direct command concerned the meal-offerings, which were *kodshei sha'ah*, it should apply only to the he-goats of Nachshon and the inauguration, which were *kodshei sha'ah*. Since the he-goat of Rosh Chodesh was *kodshei doros*, Aaron held that it was forbidden for him and his sons to eat its meat.

R' Tzaddok HaKohen notes that this is the first place in the Torah where we find

10 your sons and daughters with you; for they have been
 15-16 given as your portion and the portion of your sons from
 the feast peace-offerings of the Children of Israel.
 15 They are to bring the thigh of the raising-up and the
 breast of the waving upon the fire-offering fats to wave
 as a waving before HASHEM; and it shall be for you and
 your sons with you for an eternal decree, as HASHEM has
 commanded."

16 Moses inquired insistently about the he-goat of the

the classic exercise of the Oral Law, in which reasoning is used to define the parameters of the law.

16. שְׁעִיר הַחֻטָּאת — *The he-goat of the sin-offering*. As noted above, there were three he-goat sin-offerings — but since this phrase is in the singular, it is clear that only one of them had been burned, and it was about that one that Moses inquired. Which he-goat was it? From the next verse, the Sages derive that it was the he-goat of Rosh Chodesh (see comm., v. 17). Although Moses had instructed them to eat the meal-offerings, it was clear to them that only the *kodshei sha'ah* should be eaten. They ate the meal-offerings, as specifically instructed by Moses, and they also ate the sin-offerings of the inauguration and of Nachshon, because they, too, were *kodshei sha'ah*. But they burned the Rosh Chodesh offering, which was *kodshei doros* and to which Moses' command could not apply.

Indeed, even though they had determined that the offering should not be eaten immediately, why did

they burn it instead of leaving it to be eaten at night? The Sages in *Sifra* offer two reasons: (a) The offering had become טָמֵא, contaminated. [Moses' anger was because, had they eaten it immediately as he wanted them to, it would not have become *tamei*.] (b) An *onen's* status continues into the night, and since all three surviving Kohanim were *onenim*, they would have been forbidden to eat the offering. By the next morning, the time to eat the offering would have expired, so there was no possibility for it to be eaten (*Rashi, Sifra*; according to *Gur Aryeh*). [They burned it immediately because there was no possibility that it could ever be eaten (see *Pesachim* 82b).]

נִרְשָׁה נִרְשָׁה — *Inquired insistently* [lit. *inquire he inquired*]. Moses had two questions, as indicated by the verse's doubled expression of inquiry: Why have you burned the Rosh Chodesh offering? And why have you eaten the other offerings? Your actions are contradictory (*Rashi, Sifra*; according to *Gur Aryeh*).¹

1. These two words are the exact halfway mark of the words of the Torah. This is to teach us that the entire Torah revolves around constant inquiry. One must never stop studying and seeking ever deeper and broader understanding of the Torah (*Degel Machaneh Ephraim*).

These words show us that no matter how much someone has inquired, he has still not progressed beyond the halfway point of Torah knowledge (R' Moshe Teitelbaum of Uhel).

שָׁרָף וַיִּקְצֹף עַל־אֶלְעָזָר וְעַל־אִיתָמָר בְּנֵי
 אַהֲרֹן הַנּוֹתָרִים לֵאמֹר: מִדּוּעַ לֹא־אָכַלְתֶּם
 אֶת־הַחֹטְאֹת בַּמָּקוֹם הַקֹּדֶשׁ כִּי קֹדֶשׁ קִדְּשִׁים
 הוּא וְאַתֶּה וְנָתַן לָכֶם לֶשֶׁאֵת אֶת־עֵזֶן הָעֵדָה
 לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: הֵן לֹא־הוּבָא אֶת־
 דָּמָהּ אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ פְּנִימָה אָכּוֹל תֹּאכְלוּ אֹתָהּ
 בַּקֹּדֶשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי: וַיַּדְבֵּר אַהֲרֹן אֶל־מֹשֶׁה
 הֵן הָיוּ הַקָּרִיבֹו אֶת־חֹטְאֹתָם וְאֶת־עֲלֹתָם

וַיִּקְצֹף — And he was wrathful. According to Moses' assumption that they had wrongly burned the meat, his anger was justified, for they had violated a sacred charge. But, as the following verses show, Moses was wrong in his interpretation of the law. Chananiah ben Yehudah taught that Moses erred because he became angry. [Had it not been for his anger, he would have analyzed what happened and realized that the Kohanim had acted properly (*Malbim*).] R' Yehudah explained that first Moses erred; that is why he became angry (*Sifra*).

Moses erred because he became angry (*Vayikra Rabbah* 13:1). The Torah does not omit the shortcomings of the greatest people, because we must learn from their errors just as we learn from their virtues. If the master of all prophets could err due to anger, then surely the rest of us must learn to control our passions. The Sages liken anger to idolatry, because in both cases a person gives up control of himself, either to his anger or to his false beliefs.

עַל־אֶלְעָזָר — With Elazar. Actually Moses' sharp criticism was meant for Aaron, who was in charge of the service, but in deference to Aaron, he directed his words toward the sons (*Rashi*).

לֶשֶׁאֵת אֶת־עֵזֶן — To gain forgiveness for the sin. Clearly the goat in question had been brought for forgiveness, but this is not true of every sin-offering. As is frequently the case of prescribed sin-offerings, those of Nachshon and of the inauguration were brought to provide enhanced holiness and purity. Of that day's sin-offering, only that of Rosh Chodesh came for atonement (*Shavuot* 2b); it atones for a person who eats from the offerings without realizing that he is *tamei*, and for someone who inadvertently enters the Sanctuary while *tamei* (*Rashi*).

לְכַפֵּר — To atone. By eating the flesh of the offerings, Kohanim effect atonement for the owners (*Rashi*).

18~19. Part of the dialogue between Moses and Aaron involved suggestions by Moses of possible reasons for why the offering had been

10

17-19

sin-offering, for behold, it had been burned! and he was wrathful with Elazar and Issamar, Aaron's remaining sons, saying: ¹⁷ "Why did you not eat the sin-offering in a holy place, for it is most holy; and He gave it to you to gain forgiveness for the sin of the assembly and to atone for them before HASHEM? ¹⁸ Behold, its blood was not brought into the Sanctuary within; you should have eaten it in the Holy, as I had commanded!"

¹⁹ Aaron spoke to Moses, saying: "Was it they who this day offered their sin-offering and their elevation-

burned. These suggestions are alluded to in the next two verses.

18. הֵן לֹא הוּבָא אֶת־דָּמָה — Behold, its blood was not brought. Moses was suggesting a possible reason why they had not eaten it. Perhaps its blood had been brought into the Sanctuary, and if so, it would have become disqualified and would have had to be burned (6:23). No such offerings are ever eaten (Rashi).

כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי — As I had commanded [i.e., in HASHEM's Name]. Moses argued that just as they had been commanded specifically to eat the meal-offerings, they should have realized that the commandment applied to all the offerings of the day, including the sin-offering of Rosh Chodesh (Rashi).

19. וַיְדַבֵּר אֶהֱרֹן — Aaron spoke. Although Moses had addressed his harsh queries to Aaron's sons, they did not respond, for it would have been disrespectful for them to speak up in their father's presence and for them to take issue with their teacher Moses. [As noted above, one of the sins of Nadav and Avihu was that they were disrespectful to Moses and

Aaron. Thus, the behavior of the surviving sons displayed their personal merit, and had a direct bearing on their survival.] (Rashi).

הֵן הֵיָּם — Was it they who this day...? The translation follows Rashi, who explains that Aaron was responding to another of Moses' suggestions to explain why they might have burnt the offering, a suggestion that is not in the text, but that we deduce from Aaron's response. Perhaps they had performed its service after becoming *onenim*; since an ordinary Kohen is forbidden to perform the sacrificial service, their service would have been invalid and the offering would have had to be burned. To this suggestion of Moses, Aaron responded, Was it they [i.e., the ordinary Kohanim] who this day offered their sin-offering and their elevation-offering before HASHEM? It was not they, but Aaron, the Kohen Gadol, who had performed the day's entire service, and a Kohen Gadol is permitted to do so when he is an *onen*. However, Aaron went on to say, even though the service of the offering was properly performed, there was no one who

שמיני י/כ
לפני יהוה נתקראנה אתי כאלה ואכלתי
ב חטאת היום היטב בעיני יהוה: וישמע
משה ויטב בעיניו:
יא/א ששי א ויברך יהוה אל-משה ואל-אהרן לאמר

was permitted to eat the offering. Even a Kohen Gadol is restricted from eating while he is an *onen* (Rashi).

Now that such things befell me. Now that this tragedy has made me an *onen*, and therefore disqualified me from eating the sacrificial meat. . .

Would HASHEM approve? Would it have been proper for even me to eat the Rosh Chodesh offering? Surely HASHEM would not have approved! All of us ate the offerings that were restricted to today — as you commanded regarding the meal-offerings — and we realized that your order applied also to the

sin-offerings of Nachshon and the special inauguration offerings, but we burned the Rosh Chodesh offering (Rashi).

And he approved. As soon as Moses heard Aaron's reasoning, he conceded that Aaron was right. In a demonstration of the humility that was at the essence of his greatness, Moses did not attempt to defend his position. Instead he admitted without embarrassment that God had instructed him only with regard to the specific offerings of the day, just as Aaron and his sons had assumed — but he had forgotten (Rashi, Zevachim 101a).^[1]

XI

5 The Laws of Kashrus

The laws of *kashrus* are generally assigned to the חקים, the Divine decrees for which the Torah gives no reasons. This is not quite accurate. It is more accurate to say that the Torah gives no reason that is comprehensible to the human mind, for at the end of this chapter (vs. 43-45) the Torah stresses the reason for *kashrus* in very

clear and powerful terms: By observing these laws, the Jew can pull himself up the ladder of holiness; by ignoring them, he not only contaminates himself, he gradually builds a barrier that blocks out his comprehension of holiness. Just as someone who is constantly exposed to loud music and harsh noise, slowly and imperceptibly, but surely, suffers a

1. R' David Nosson of Shidlovitz was once visiting his master, R' Chaim of Sanz. The master asked his disciple to deliver a Torah thought. R' David Nosson was in a quandary. He could not disobey his master, but he felt uncomfortable about lecturing in his master's presence. He found a solution to his dilemma by speaking — and yet not speaking. He said the following:

The Torah tells us: *Moses heard and he approved*. As the teacher of the nation, Moses was always forced to speak. Now he was in the position of listening, as Aaron expounded upon the proper interpretation of the law. Moses listened to someone else — and he enjoyed the experience!

10 offering before HASHEM? Now that such things befell me
20 — were I to eat this day's sin-offering, would HASHEM
approve?"

²⁰ Moses heard and he approved.

11 **H**ASHEM spoke to Moses and to Aaron, to say to them.
1

loss of his ability to hear fine sounds and detect subtle modulations, so too the Torah informs us that a Jew's consumption of non-kosher food deadens his spiritual capacities and denies him the full opportunity to become holy. And worst of all, it renders him incapable of even perceiving his loss. For this reason, *Rama* (*Yoreh De'ah* 81:7) cautions that even small children should be prevented from eating forbidden foods, lest their spiritual potential be harmed.

R' Hirsch notes a close connection between this chapter and the previous one. In the case of Nadav and Avihu, we saw how even our greatest men could fall prey to mistaken sentiments that could lead them to grave sins. After that narrative, the Torah forbade Kohanim to indulge in beverages that could affect their clarity of judgment. Then the Torah required that sacred meat must be eaten in sacred places. The implication of these commandments is that what a person eats has a critical bearing on his "spiritual and moral calling" and the discharge of the Jew's responsibility to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Quite logically, therefore, this chapter goes on to list the foods that are forbidden not only to Kohanim but to all Jews.

Citing *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Rashi* (v. 2) notes a reason why various animal food is forbidden to Jews.

Animals are referred to as חַיָּה from the word חַיִּים, *life*. It is the spiritual mission of the Jewish people to attach themselves to the Ultimate Source of spiritual life. Consequently, Jews must refrain from consuming any foods that the Divine Intelligence knows to be an obstacle to the attainment of this lofty goal. As *Chinuch* notes, the harm caused by these foods is not physical; rather they impede the heart from attaining the higher values of the soul.

This chapter deals primarily with which categories of animals, fowl, and fish may be eaten, and which are forbidden. As such, it relates to all Jews as much as it does to Kohanim, which raises the question why this chapter is included in *Leviticus*, the book that deals with the laws of the Temple and the Kohanim. *Ramban* notes, however, that the chapter concludes with laws of טָמְאָה, contamination, which are of especial importance to Kohanim because of their responsibility for the purity of the Tabernacle. Consequently the entire chapter is placed in *Leviticus*.

1. אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן — *To Moses and to Aaron*. As noted above (1:1), even when Aaron is mentioned as having joined Moses in receiving a Divine command, it was given only to Moses; however he was to transmit the command to Aaron before teaching it to the rest of the people (*Rashi*).

ב אֵלֵיהֶם: דִּבְרוּ אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֹאת
הַחֲזִיהַ אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכְלוּ מִכָּל-הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר
ג עַל-הָאָרֶץ: כֹּל ׀ מִפֶּרֶסַת פְּרִסָּה וְשִׁסְעַת

שמיני
יא/ב-ג

Ramban notes that Aaron is mentioned here because the laws of this chapter have special relevance to Kohanim (see prefatory remark to this chapter).

לֵאמֹר אֵלֵיהֶם — *To say to them.* Moses and Aaron were commanded to repeat these laws to *them*, i.e., Elazar and Issamar, before teaching them to the Elders and the rest of the nation (*Rashi, Sifra*).

2. דִּבְרוּ — *Speak.* The verb is in the plural, to indicate that Moses and the entire priestly family — to whom Moses taught the commandment first — were to share the honor of conveying this chapter to the people. This was their reward for accepting without protest the Divine decree against Nadav and Avihu (*Rashi*).

זֹאת הַחֲזִיהַ — *These are the creatures.* The word חֲזִיהַ has the connotation of life. The verse begins the laws of kosher and non-kosher foods by intimating that the Jewish people was instructed in these laws because it is a nation that is attached to the Source of spiritual life, and these laws are its guarantors of such life. In the parable of R' Tanchuma, a doctor came to visit two patients. To one of them he said, "You may eat whatever you like." To the other he gave a precise and restrictive diet. Soon, the first

patient died and the second recovered. The doctor explained that he could tell that there was no hope for the first patient, so there was no reason to deny him what he loved to eat, but the second patient was basically healthy, so it was important to give him a diet that would return him to health. So it was with Israel. Because the Jewish people have the capacity for spiritual life, God "prescribed" foods that would be conducive to their spiritual growth (*Rashi*).^[1]

זֹאת — *These.* Moses showed the people every species and told them which was permissible and which was not (*Rashi*). God wanted the people to know and recognize all the living creatures so that the tradition would be clear to everyone (*Gur Aryeh*).

הַבְּהֵמָה ... הַחֲזִיהַ — *Creatures ... animals.* In this verse, as in many other places, these two words are used interchangeably (*Rashi, Sifra*). On other occasions, חֲזִיהַ refers to wild animals only, while בְּהֵמָה refers to domesticated animals only (*Malbim*).

⚡ 5 Permissible and Forbidden Land Animals

The Torah identifies the animals whose flesh may be eaten as ruminants (i.e., cud-chewing animals)

1. The parable of R' Tanchuma does not mean that kosher foods guarantee physical life and non-kosher foods injure one's health. This is obviously not the case, since gentiles are no less healthy than Jews. Rather the intent is that Israel, as the nation that is attached to God and that accepted the Torah, must be kept from foods that will interfere with its spiritual progress (*Kli Yakar*).

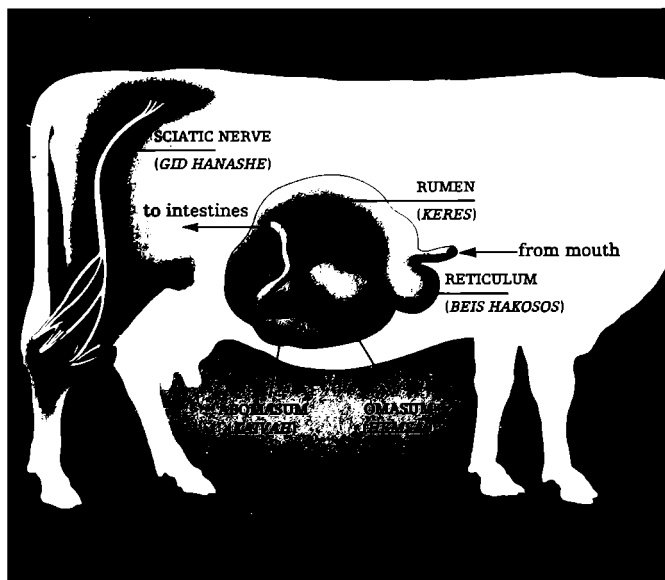
11 ² Speak to the Children of Israel saying: These are the
 2-3 creatures that you may eat from among the animals
 that are upon the earth. ³ Any one among the animals
 that has a split hoof, which is completely separated into

whose hooves are split. A ruminant's stomach consists of four chambers (see illustration). They are: the rumen (רֶמֶן); the reticulum (בֵּית הַכּוֹסוֹת) from which the food is redigested upward; the omasum (הֶקְמָס) to which it then returns; and the abomasum (קִיכָרוֹ). The cud (i.e., the food regurgitated back to the mouth from the stomach) then passes from the chambers to the duodenum, the beginning of the small intestine. In addition to the chambers of the stomach, the animal must be cloven hoofed, as

identified in verse three.

Some authorities point out that the physical appearance of the animal is of itself insufficient to establish it as kosher. It must also be accepted by tradition as one of the ten kosher species enumerated in *Deuteronomy* 14:4-5. The Talmud explains that since there are far more non-kosher animals than kosher, the Torah enumerates the animals that are kosher.

Rambam (*Hil. Maachalos Asuros* 1:8) states: "There are not in the entire universe any animals that are



שֶׁסַע פֶּרֶסֶת מַעֲלַת גֵּרָה בְּבִהֶמָּה אֹתָהּ
 אֲכָלוּ: אֲךָ אֶת-זֶה לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמַּעֲלֵי
 הַגֵּרָה וּמִמִּפְרֵסֵי הַפֶּרֶסָה אֶת-הַגִּמְלָל כִּי-
 מַעֲלָה גֵרָה הוּא וּפֶרֶסָה אֵינָנוּ מִפְרִיס טָמֵא
 ה הוּא לָכֶם: וְאֶת-הַשָּׁפָן כִּי-מַעֲלָה גֵרָה הוּא
 וּפֶרֶסָה לֹא יִפְרִיס טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם: וְאֶת-
 הָאֲרֻנָּבֶת כִּי-מַעֲלַת גֵּרָה הוּא וּפֶרֶסָה לֹא
 ז הַפֶּרִיסָה טָמֵאָה הוּא לָכֶם: וְאֶת-הַחֲזִיר
 כִּי-מִפְרִיס פֶּרֶסָה הוּא וְשֶׁסַע שֶׁסַע פֶּרֶסָה
 ח וְהוּא גֵרָה לֹא יִגֵּר טָמֵא הוּא לָכֶם: מִבְּשָׂרָם
 לֹא תֹאכְלוּ וּבְנִבְלָתָם לֹא תִגְעוּ טָמֵאִים הֵם

permitted to be eaten except for the ten species enumerated in the Torah.” Based on this ruling, animals of the other species that appear to have the kosher physical identification are nevertheless to be excluded from the kosher species, since they are not among the types mentioned in the Torah (*Kashruth* pp. 17-18; Rabbi Yacov Lipschutz, Mesorah Pub.).

3. וְשֶׁסַע שֶׁסַע פֶּרֶסֶת — *Which is completely separated into double hooves.* Only if its hooves are split completely is an animal kosher, but not if its hooves are split at the top and connected at the bottom (*Rashi*).

מַעֲלַת גֵּרָה — *Brings up its cud.* See prefatory remarks above.

טָמֵאָה / Contamination or Uncleaness

The term *tumah* has two meanings, depending on the context. Most

often, it refers to the spiritual contamination that can be conveyed to people or things, and that makes sacrificial meat unfit, and so on. At other times, as in this chapter, it refers primarily to forbidden foods. Thus, when the Torah describes an animal as “unclean,” it has nothing to do with contamination. In fact, no living animal can ever be *tamei*, contaminated. Even if a horse carries a human corpse on its back, the animal is not *tamei* in the sense of contamination, although it is *tamei* in that it is forbidden as food.

4. אֲךָ אֶת-זֶה — *But this.* The next four verses give cases of animals that are forbidden because they have only one of the two required signs of *kashrus*. Many have noted that, other than the species mentioned here, no animal has ever been discovered that has one of the signs without having the other.^[1]

1. In a homiletical vein, *Kli Yakar* notes that in listing the non-kosher animals, the Torah first gives the kosher sign, instead of simply explaining that the animal is not kosher because of the

double hooves, and that brings up its cud — that one you may eat. ⁴ But this is what you may not eat from among those that bring up their cud or that have split hooves: the camel, for it brings up its cud, but its hoof is not split; it is unclean to you; ⁵ and the hyrax, for it brings up its cud, but its hoof is not split; it is unclean to you; ⁶ and the hare, for it brings up its cud, but its hoof is not split; it is unclean to you; ⁷ and the pig, for its hoof is split and its hoof is completely separated, but it does not chew its cud; it is unclean to you. ⁸ You may not eat of their flesh nor may you touch their carcass; they are unclean to you.

5. הַשָּׂפָן — *The hyrax*. This is a small mammal resembling a woodchuck. Unlike a rabbit or hare, to which it also has a slight resemblance, it has short ears and its feet are hoofed.

6. הָאָרְנָבֶת — *The hare or rabbit*. Both translations are commonly used, since the hare and the rabbit are of the same family and are very similar. Many translate the שָׂפָן of the previous verse as a rabbit or hare, as well.

These two words illustrate the difficulty of translating the unfamiliar names of the animals and birds in this chapter. Aside from the lack of clarity concerning their identity, there is a more fundamental problem in the case of the hyrax, rabbit, and hare. The Torah states clearly that these animals chew their cud, but none of them do so in the same way that kosher animals do. In the words of R' Hirsch: "this translation can

only be right if it were sure that both these animals chew the cud, which hardly seems to be the case." These animals excrete moist pellets from their stomachs to their mouths, which they eat again, and then excrete dry pellets. Thus, they appear to chew their cud, but what they do is in no way similar to cows and sheep. Perhaps the term "bringing up its cud" simply refers to any animal that brings food back to its mouth from its stomach, whether or not it is like a cow. Or perhaps, as in the case of most of the animals and fowl in this chapter, we simply do not know what they are.

8. לֹא תִגְעַר — *Nor may you touch*. The verse is not to be taken as a blanket prohibition against touching such carcasses, for an Israelite is permitted to do so even though he will become contaminated thereby. This verse ap-

sign it lacks. He explains that the Torah means to suggest that the presence of a single kosher sign makes it *worse*. The presence of one sign symbolizes hypocritical people who always try to publicize their occasional good deeds or virtuous traits, instead of concentrating on eliminating their shortcomings. It is such dishonesty that stamps them as *treifah*.

This concept has entered the Yiddish idiom, which describes a hypocrite as a *chazir fissel*, or "pig's foot," because a pig tends to lie on the ground with its feet thrust forward, displaying its cloven hooves, as if to mislead onlookers into thinking it is kosher.

ט לָכֶם: אֶת־זֶה תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם כָּל
אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ סִנְפִיר וְקִשְׁקֶשֶׁת בַּמַּיִם בַּיָּמִים
וּבִנְחָלִים אַתֶּם תֹּאכְלוּ: וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לוֹ
סִנְפִיר וְקִשְׁקֶשֶׁת בַּיָּמִים וּבִנְחָלִים מִכָּל־
שְׂרֹץ הַמַּיִם וּמִכָּל גֶּפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם
יא שֶׁקֶץ הֵם לָכֶם: וְשֶׁקֶץ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם מִבְּשָׂרָם
יב לֹא תֹאכְלוּ וְאֶת־נִבְלָתָם תִּשְׁקְצוּ: כָּל
אֲשֶׁר אֵין־לוֹ סִנְפִיר וְקִשְׁקֶשֶׁת בַּמַּיִם
יג שֶׁקֶץ הוּא לָכֶם: וְאֶת־אֵלֶּה תִּשְׁקְצוּ מִן־
הָעוֹף לֹא יֹאכְלוּ שֶׁקֶץ הֵם אֶת־הַבְּשָׂר

plies only during the festival visits to the Temple, when everyone must be pure. At such times, no one may touch a carcass, because it will contaminate him (*Rashi*).

9-12. Permissible and Forbidden Fish

9. וְקִשְׁקֶשֶׁת — *And scales*. The scales that are indicative of a kosher fish are only those that can be scraped off easily with a knife (*Ramban*). This excludes fish whose scales are not clearly defined, such as shellfish, and amphibians.

10. שְׂרֹץ הַמַּיִם — *That swarms in the water*, i.e., small creatures that live in the water. The next term, *living creatures in the water*, refers to the large water animals (*Sifra*).

שֶׁקֶץ — *An abomination*. The term שֶׁקֶץ, *abomination*, is not used in connection with non-kosher land animals, which are referred to as טָמֵא, *unclean*. The latter term is generally more inclusive, for it denotes not only the prohibition of consumption as

food, but also the contamination that results from touching the carcass of the animal after it is dead. In the case of aquatic life, however, contamination does not result from such contact, consequently the term *sheketz* is more appropriate (*Ralbag*)

11. וְשֶׁקֶץ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם — *And they shall remain abominated to you*. Even if the forbidden fish becomes part of a mixture in which it is no longer recognizable [*bitul*], it remains forbidden if its taste is still noticeable (*Rashi*).

מִבְּשָׂרָם ... נִבְלָתָם — *Their flesh ... their carcass*. *Flesh* refers to fish that have been killed for food; *carcass* refers to fish that have died (*Chizkuni*; *Bechor Shor*).

12. בַּמַּיִם — *In the water*. Some species shed their scales when they leave the water. This verse indicates that the *kashrus* requirement of scales applies only as long as the fish is in the water. That it sheds its scales on dry land does not render it unkosher (*Rashi*).

11 ⁹ *This you may you eat from whatever is in the water: anything that has fins and scales in the water, in the seas, and in the streams, those may you eat.* ¹⁰ *And anything that does not have fins and scales in the seas and in the streams, from among all that swarms in the water, and from among all living creatures in the water; they are an abomination to you.* ¹¹ *And they shall remain abominated to you; you shall not eat of their flesh and you shall abominate their carcass.* ¹² *Anything that does not have fins and scales in the water — it is an abomination to you.*

¹³ *These shall you abominate from among the birds, they may not be eaten, they are abomination: the nesher,*

13-19. The Forbidden Birds

Unlike the kosher animals and fish, which are identified not by name but by characteristics, and whose identities are clear beyond doubt or dispute, the identities of the permissible birds are very cloudy. First of all, the Torah gives no identifying signs, and secondly, the non-kosher birds are given by name, which requires that the names be familiar. As a result of the various exiles and dispersions, the language of the Torah fell into relative disuse, with the result that the exact identities of the birds became doubtful, just as we are uncertain about the location of some of the ancient cities mentioned in Scripture. Accordingly, *Yoreh De'ah* 82:2 rules that it is forbidden to eat any species of bird unless there is a well-established tradition that it is kosher. This explains why Jews use very few species of fowl, although the vast majority are kosher, since the Torah here lists only twenty non-kosher species. Since the Halachah rules that

we do not know the accurate translations of the fowl in the Torah's list, we follow the lead of R' Hirsch in transliterating rather than offering translations. The commentary will give the translations that are suggested by various commentators.

13. וְהִשְׁקֵצוּ — *Shall you abominate.* The carcasses of forbidden fowl do not contaminate; consequently the term *sheketz* rather than *tamei* is more appropriate, as noted in comm. to v.10. The laws of contamination relating to birds apply only to kosher birds.

לֹא יֵאָכְלוּ — *They may not be eaten.* The implication is that it is forbidden for them to be eaten, even if you do not eat them, meaning that one may not give such foods even to children who are not personally liable for eating them (*Rashi*).

נָשֶׁר — The commentators generally agree that this is the eagle or bald eagle, although *Rabbeinu Tam* (*Tos. Chullin* 63a) questions even this.

שמיני יד וְאֶת־הַפֶּרֶס וְאֶת־הָעֹנִיָּה; וְאֶת־הַדָּאָה וְאֶת־
 יא/יד-כא טו הָאֵיָה לְמִינָהּ: אֵת כָּל־עֶרֶב לְמִינֹו: וְאֵת בֵּת
 הַיַּעֲנָה וְאֶת־הַתְּחֻמָּס וְאֶת־הַשֶּׁחַף וְאֶת־הַנֶּץ
 יו לְמִינָהּ: וְאֶת־הַכּוֹס וְאֶת־הַשִּׁלָּךְ וְאֶת־
 יח הַיִּנְשׁוּף: וְאֶת־הַתְּנַשְׁמַת וְאֶת־הַקָּאָת וְאֶת־
 יט הַרְחָם: וְאֵת הַחֲסִידָה הָאֲנָפָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת־
 כ הַדּוֹכִיפֶת וְאֶת־הָעֵטְלָף: כָּל שֶׁרֶץ הָעוֹף
 כא הַהֵלֶךְ עַל־אַרְבַּע שֶׁקֶץ הוּא לָכֶם: אֵךְ
 אֶת־זֶה תֹאכְלוּ מִכָּל שֶׁרֶץ הָעוֹף הַהֵלֶךְ

פרס — The bearded vulture (R' Saadiah Gaon; *Ralbag*).

עֹנִיָּה — *Ibn Ezra* understands R' Saadiah's translation as the mythological griffin, but rejects it because the Torah could not be speaking of a non-existent creature. However R' Y. Kafach notes that the Arabic word used by the Gaon also refers to an actual bird. R' D. Z. Hoffman translates it as the white-tailed or sea eagle.

14. דָּאָה — According to R' Hoffman's translation of R' Saadiah, this is the kite. *Ralbag* translates it as a species of vulture.^[1]

לְמִינָהּ — According to its kind. Wherever this is added to the name of the bird, it means to include birds of varying names and appearance that belong to the same species (*Rashi*).

15. עֶרֶב — This is generally assumed

to be the raven. *Rabbeinu Tam* (*Tos. Chullin* 62b) disputes this translation, but offers no alternative.

16. בֵּת הַיַּעֲנָה — The ostrich (R' Saadiah; *Chizkuni*).

נֶץ — This is the sparrow hawk (*Rashi*; *Ramban*; *Ralbag*) but *Tosafos* (*Chullin* 63a) questions this definition, without offering an alternative.

17. כּוֹס ... יִנְשׁוּף — Both birds howl at night and have cheeks that are similar to those of humans: the owl and the great horned owl (*Rashi*). According to *Ralbag*, *kos* is the falcon.

שִׁלָּךְ — A bird that draws fish from the water (*Rashi*), apparently a pelican, heron, or cormorant.

18. תְּנַשְׁמַת — The bat (*Rashi*; *Chizkuni*), or the owl (*Ralbag*).

19. חֲסִידָה — The stork (*Rashi*).

1. In *Deuteronomy* (14:13), the name of this bird is spelled רָאָה, with a *reish*, a word that suggests seeing. The Talmud comments that this bird has the ability to see a carcass from very great distances, from Babylonia all the way to Eretz Yisrael (*Chullin* 63a). Since vision is such a great gift, why should this bird be non-kosher? Because it uses its ability to see dead carcasses, instead of constructive things! (*Oznaim LaTorah*).

11 the peres, the ozniah; ¹⁴ the da'ah and the ayah, each according to its kind; ¹⁵ every orev, according to its kind; ¹⁶ the bas haya'anah, the tachmos, the shachaf, and the netz, each according to its kind; ¹⁷ the kos, the shalach, and the yanshuf; ¹⁸ the tinshemesh, the ka'as, and the racham; ¹⁹ the chasidah, the anafah according to its kind, the duchifas, and the atalef.

²⁰ All flying swarming creatures that walk on four legs — it is an abomination to you. ²¹ Only this may you eat from among all flying swarming creatures that walk

There was a tradition in some communities that the stork was a kosher bird, a tradition questioned by *Teshuvos HaRosh* (20:20); but defended by R' Yerucham (Bais Yosef, *Yoreh De'ah* 82).^[1]

אֶנְיָה — This is a separate species: the hot-tempered *dayah* (*Chullin* 63a). It is the heron (*Rashi*).

דְּרוֹבִיפָּת — The wild hen whose comb is doubled over (*Rashi*, *Chullin* 63a). *Rashi* here identifies it as the hoopoe.

עֶטְלָף — The bat (*R' Saadia*).

20-23. Forbidden and Permissible Insects

Even though a few species of insects may be eaten, as indicated in the following verses, their identity is unclear. *Rashi* states that it is impossible to determine which are kosher solely through the use of their physical characteristics; consequently, only firm traditions suffice to permit such consumption. With the passage of

time, such traditions have grown virtually extinct. There are some Moroccan and Yemenite Jews who have preserved their ancient traditions regarding the kosher insects. However, *Or HaChaim* writes that when he was in Morocco, he called out against the consumption of any insects, and the communities that obeyed him had been spared from calamities for twelve years, because Torah and good deeds are a shield against punishment.

שָׂרָץ הָעוֹף — Flying swarming creatures. These are insects, such as flies, hornets, mites, and grasshoppers (*Rashi*). According to *Ramban*, a bird is two legged and walks with its head held erect and higher than its body. It relies on its wings and always flaps them, and is known as **עוֹף כָּנָף**, winged bird, or simply **עוֹף**, bird. The flying swarming creatures of this verse walk with their heads downward toward the ground and, as the verse states next, they walk on

1. Why is it called *chasidah*? Because it displays kindness (**חֶסֶד**) toward others of its species by sharing food with them (*Rashi*; *Chullin* 63a). If it is so commendable, why is it stigmatized as a non-kosher bird?

The *Rizhiner Rebbe* responded, because it directs its kindness exclusively towards its fellows, but will not help strangers.

שמיני לו ק על-אַרְבַּע אֲשֶׁר-לֹא כָרְעִים מִמֶּעַל לְרַגְלָיו
 יא/כב-כו בב לְנִתְר בָּהֶן עַל-הָאָרֶץ: אֶת-אֵלֶּה מֵהֶם
 תֹּאכְלוּ אֶת-הָאֲרֵבָה לְמִינֹו וְאֶת-הַסִּלְעָם
 לְמִינֵהוּ וְאֶת-הַחֲרָגָל לְמִינֵהוּ וְאֶת-הַחֲגָב
 כג לְמִינֵהוּ: וְכָל שֶׁרֶץ הָעוֹף אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ אֲרֵבָע
 כד רַגְלִים שֶׁקֶץ הוּא לָכֶם: וְלֹאֵלֶּה תִּטְמְאוּ כֹל-
 כה הַנֶּגַע בְּנִבְלָתָם יִטְמָא עַד-הָעָרֵב: וְכָל-
 הַנֶּשֶׂא מִנִּבְלָתָם יִכָּבֵס בַּגִּידוֹ וְיִטְמָא עַד-
 כו הָעָרֵב: לְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר הוּא מִפְּרִסֵּת
 פִּרְסָה וְשִׁסַּע | אֵינָנָה שְׁסַעַת וְגֵרָה אֵינָנָה

four legs. R' Hirsch and R' D.Z. Hoffman raise the difficulty that all insects have six legs, not four. R' Hirsch interprets that when the verse mentions "four" legs, it means to say that these creatures have more than two legs, which was the characteristic of the birds discussed previously. R' Hoffman explains that they have four legs that are used for simple walking, while the other two are used for jumping.

21. כָּרְעִים — *Jumping legs*. These insects have two jointed legs—similar to the human knee—whose joints are higher than the insect's body, when it is at rest. It uses these powerful legs to launch itself from the ground when it flies or jumps. According to Rashi, in kosher insects, these jointed legs are near the neck.

22. אֶת-אֵלֶּה מֵהֶם — *These from among them*. Although they have the physical characteristics that denote *kashrus*, they may not be eaten

unless they are known by the names listed below. The Talmud lists additional physical characteristics of the kosher species but, as a practical matter, we are not familiar enough with the practical application of these instructions to know precisely which insects are permissible (Rashi).

24-31. The Non-kosher Creatures that Transmit Contamination

The rest of the chapter discusses the transmission of טִמְאָה, *contamination*. As a practical matter, contamination affects only sacred foods or objects, including *terumah* and *maaser sheni*, and people who may touch them. It is not forbidden for people to become contaminated through touching the items mentioned in this chapter, unless they will be touching such sacred objects. The only sort of contamination that is forbidden without exception is for a Kohen to receive contamination resulting from a human corpse (21:1-4, 11).

11 on four legs: one that has jumping legs above its legs,
22-26 with which to spring upon the earth. ²² You may eat these from among them: the *arbeh* according to its kind; the *sal'am* according to its kind, the *chargol* according to its kind, and the *chagav* according to its kind. ²³ Every creeping flying thing that has four legs — it is an abomination to you.

²⁴ You become contaminated through the following — anyone who touches their carcass becomes contaminated until evening; ²⁵ and anyone who carries their carcass shall immerse his clothing and be contaminated until evening — ²⁶ any animal that has split hooves that are not completely split, or does not chew its cud,

Unlike the popular misconception, no living animal other than man can become *טמא*, contaminated, or transmit contamination. Kosher animals that are slaughtered through a halachically valid *shechitah* are not contaminated, thus kosher meat is not contaminated. These kosher animals will be discussed below in verses 39-40. The larger non-kosher animals become contaminated no matter how they die or are killed. Insects are never *tamei*, alive or dead. In the case of small, creeping animals, only the eight species listed below are *tamei* when they die.

24. יִטְמָא עַד-הָעֶרֶב. — *Becomes contaminated until evening.* Under no circumstances can *tumah* be removed unless the person affected immerses himself in a *mikveh* (17:15). That done, his contamination ends, except that, as our verse states, he is not allowed to eat or touch *תְּרוּמָה*, the *Kohen's portion*, until evening (Ramban).

25. וְכָל-הַנֶּשֶׂא — *And anyone who carries.* The contamination of one who carries a carcass — even if he does not actually touch it — is stricter than that of someone who merely touches it. As this verse teaches, one who carries a carcass contaminates his garments as well as himself. Consequently, they, too, must be immersed in a *mikveh*, if the owner wishes to remove their contamination (*Rashi*). However, the carrying of a carcass contaminates a person only if he moves it in the process; if, for example, he supports its weight with his shoulder, but does not touch or move it, he is not *tamei* (*Rashbam*).

26. לְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה. — *Any animal.* This refers back to the list of contaminations that was introduced in verse 24. Our verse teaches that those contaminations are conveyed by the carcasses of animals that lack both of the signs required to make an animal kosher.

מַעֲלָה טְמֵאִים הֵם לָכֶם כָּל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהֶם
יִטְמָא: וְכָל ׀ הוֹלֵךְ עַל־כַּפָּיו בְּכָל־הַחַיָּה
הַהֹלֶכֶת עַל־אַרְבַּע טְמֵאִים הֵם לָכֶם כָּל־
הַנֹּגֵעַ בְּנִבְלָתָם יִטְמָא עַד־הָעָרֶב: וְהַנִּשְׂאָ
אֶת־נִבְלָתָם יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְיִטְמָא עַד־הָעָרֶב
טְמֵאִים הֵמָּה לָכֶם: וְזֶה
לָכֶם הַטְּמֵא בִּשְׂרָץ הַשָּׂרִץ עַל־הָאָרֶץ
הַחֹלֵד וְהָעֶכְבֹּר וְהָצִבּ לַמִּינֵהוּ: וְהָאֲנָקָה
וְהַכָּח וְהַלִּטְטָא וְהַחֲמָט וְהַתְּנַשְּׁמַת: אֵלֶּה
הַטְּמֵאִים לָכֶם בְּכָל־הַשָּׂרִץ כָּל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהֶם
בְּמָתָם יִטְמָא עַד־הָעָרֶב: וְכָל אֲשֶׁר־
יַפֹּל־עָלָיו מֵהֶם ׀ בְּמָתָם יִטְמָא מִכָּל־כְּלִי־
עֵץ א֥וּ בָּגֶד א֥וּ־עוֹר א֥וּ שֶׁק כָּל־כְּלִי

27. על-כפיו — *On its paws*. These are animals that have no hooves at all, such as dogs, bears, and cats (*Rashi*).

כל-הנוגע — *Whoever touches*. As noted in the commentary to verse 25, the contamination resulting from touching is milder than that which is caused by carrying. Therefore, our verse does not require immersion of clothing, but the next verse, which specifies carrying, extends the contamination to garments, as well.

29-31. The Small, Creeping Animals

This passage lists the eight small animals that are contaminated when they are dead and which can convey their contamination to people and objects. In the case of these animals, since not all of their identities are

clear, we transliterate them, but give the possible translations in the commentary.

29. חֹלֵד — According to *Rashi* and others, this is a weasel. *R' Saadiah* translates it as a mole.

עֶכְבֹּר — It is generally agreed that this is a mouse, and it may include other rodents, as well, such as a rat.

צָב — *Rashi* notes that this animal resembles a frog, thus it is presumably a toad. The Old French word used by *Rashi*, however, has been translated as a ferret.

30. אֲנָקָה — The hedgehog or porcupine (*Rashi*). According to *Radak*, it is the viper.

כָּח — According to *R' Saadiah*, this is a species of lizard.

11 they are contaminated to you; whoever touches them
27-32 becomes contaminated. ²⁷ And any that walks on its paws, among all animals that walk on four legs, they are contaminated to you; whoever touches their carcass shall be contaminated until evening. ²⁸ One who carries their carcass shall immerse his clothing and be contaminated until evening; they are contaminated to you.

²⁹ These are the contaminated ones among the creeping animals that creep upon the earth: the choled, the achbar, and the tzav according to its variety; ³⁰ the anakah, the koach, and the l'ta'ah; and the chomet and the tinsamesh. ³¹ Only these are contaminated to you among all the creeping animals; anyone who touches them when they are dead shall be contaminated until evening; ³² and when they are dead, anything upon which part of them falls becomes contaminated, whether it is a wooden utensil, a garment, leather, or sackcloth —

לִטְאָה — Rashi translates this as the lizard.

הַמָּט — The snail (Rashi), or the chameleon (Radak).

תַּנְשַׁמֶּת — This is not the bird of the same name in verse 18 (Chullin 63a). According to Rashi, this is the mole; according to R' Saadiah, a type of lizard.

31. כְּלִי-הַנֶּגֶז — Anyone who touches. Unlike animal carcasses, these animals transmit contamination only through touching. One who carries them without making contact does not become tamei (see Keilim 1:1-2).

32-36. Objects Receiving Contamination

Earlier we were told how carcasses can contaminate people. Now the

Torah turns to objects, and how they receive contamination through coming in contact with any of the carcasses mentioned above. As in the previous cases of such contamination, this deals with a spiritual rather than a physical concept. The contaminated item does not change in a recognizable way.

32. מֵהֶם — Part of them. Even a small part of a dead animal can cause tumah (Sifra).

בְּמֵתָם — And when they are dead. I.e., soon after they die, while the carcass is still moist; but after it dries, it can no longer contaminate (Niddah 56a).

שַׁק — Sackcloth. A coarse cloth made from goat hair (Sifra; Rashi, Shabbos 64a), or other animal hair (Sifra; Rambam, Hil. Keilim 27:1).

אֲשֶׁר-יַעֲשֶׂה מְלֶאכָה בָּהֶם בְּמִים יוֹבֵא
 וְטָמֵא עַד-הָעָרֵב וְטָהוֹר: וְכָל-כְּלִי-חָרֵשׁ
 אֲשֶׁר-יִפֹּל מֵהֶם אֶל-תּוֹכוֹ כָּל אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹכוֹ
 יִטָּמֵא וְאֹתוֹ תִּשְׁבְּרוּ: מִכָּל-הָאֵכָל אֲשֶׁר
 יֵאָכַל אֲשֶׁר יִבּוֹא עָלָיו מִיָּם יִטָּמֵא וְכָל-

שביעי לג

לד

Work is done. Only a vessel used for a productive purpose can become contaminated. A utensil whose sole purpose is to cover or shield other utensils cannot become *tamei* because they serve no purpose in themselves. A pot cover, however, would become *tamei*, because it serves as an adjunct to the pot and is considered as if it were part of the pot (*Sifra*).

Into the water. The water of a *mikveh*.

Some Rules of Contamination

The following verses involve the following fundamental rules of *tumah* and its transmission:

(a) Before a food can become *tamei*, it must receive *הַכָּשֵׁר*, *preparation*. This means that the food must have been moistened by one of seven liquids: water, dew, wine, oil, blood, milk, and date-honey (*Mach'shirim* 6:4).

(b) *Hech'sher* of food can take place only after the food has been detached from the soil; otherwise every food would be eligible to accept *tumah* simply by virtue of the fact that it becomes wet during its growth.

(c) Three degrees of *tumah* are involved in this passage: 1. the dead animal, which is an *אב הטמאה*, *father* (or *source*) of contamination; 2. the vessel, which becomes a *לִטְמָאָה*, *first degree of contamination*; and 3.

the contents of the vessel, which become *שְׁנֵי לִטְמָאָה*, *second degree of contamination*. In the case of an earthenware vessel, these contents become *tamei* merely because they are in the interior airspace of the earthenware vessel, even if they do not come in contact with the actual contamination, as we will see below.

Only food and drink can become second degrees of *tumah*; neither people nor utensils of any sort can accept any contaminations below the first degree. Consequently, food in the interior airspace becomes a second degree, but a utensil inside the airspace does not become *tamei* at all. Similarly, a food that is no longer edible cannot become contaminated, unless it has been used as a tool, in which case it has the rules of a utensil.

(d) If a carcass and food are simultaneously in the interior airspace of an earthenware vessel, but they do not touch one another, the carcass makes the vessel a first degree, and the vessel in turn makes the food a second degree.

(e) In order to transmit *tumah*, a food must be at least the volume of an egg (*Rashi*, v. 34). Meat from an animal carcass is an exception to this rule; there, the meat contaminates if it is only the volume of an olive, which is half the size of an egg (see comm. to v. 40).

Wherever the above points are

11 any utensil with which work is done — shall be brought
33-34 into the water, and remain contaminated until evening,
 and then become cleansed.

³³ Any earthenware utensil into whose interior one of
 them will fall, everything in it shall become contamin-
 ated — and you shall break it — ³⁴ of any food that is
 edible, upon which water comes, shall become contamin-

implied by the verses, we will point it
 out in the course of the commentary.

33. חֶרֶשׁ — *Earthenware*. Earthen-
 ware vessels are unique in three
 respects: (a) They become contamin-
 ated only through their interior, but
 not if *tumah* comes in contact with an
 outside wall; (b) they become contamin-
 ated when the *tumah* merely enters
 the airspace, even if it does not come
 in contact with the surface of the
 vessel; and (c) earthenware cannot be
 purified through immersion in a
mikveh (Rashi).^[1]

בְּתוֹכוֹ — *Whose interior*. Unique to
 earthenware vessels is that they ac-
 quire *tumah* only through their inter-
 ior airspace. See (c) and (d) of
 prefatory remarks.

וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן תִּשְׁבֹּר — *And you shall break it*.
 Immersion in a *mikveh* does not
 remove contamination from earthen-
 ware. The only way to cleanse the
 vessel is by breaking it so that it can
 no longer perform its original task. If
 it held liquids, it must be punctured;

if it held solids, a hole must be made
 that is large enough for its intended
 contents to fall out (Rashi).

34. מִכֵּל-הָאֵכֶל — *Of any food*. This
 verse qualifies the previous verse,
 which spoke of anything in the
 interior of the vessel. This verse adds
 that only food or drink can become
tamei merely by being in the interior
 of the vessel into which a carcass fell,
 which implies that utensils cannot
 become contaminated unless they are
 actually touched by the carcass. See
 rule (c) (Rashi).

אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל — *That is edible*. But food
 or drink that has become unfit for
 consumption cannot become *tamei*
 (*Sifra*). Furthermore, the Sages
 derive that a food cannot convey
 contamination unless there is enough
 of it to be considered at least a
 satisfying snack, which requires that
 it have no less than the volume of an
 egg. See rule (e) (Rashi, *Sifra*).

אֲשֶׁר יָבוֹא עָלָיו מֵיִם — *Upon which*
water comes. Once a liquid falls on a

1. An earthenware vessel is unique in that it can become contaminated only if the
 contamination comes into its interior airspace. Even if the object touches the exterior wall of
 the earthenware vessel, it remains pure. Vessels of other materials are exactly the opposite.
 Only if they are touched can they become contaminated, but if a carcass merely comes into the
 airspace without touching the vessel, it does not become contaminated. Why is earthenware
 different? Earthenware is made of clay, which is virtually worthless. It has value only so long
 as it has the capacity to contain something. Remove that capacity and it has no value. Vessels
 of gold or silver, for example, have some value even if they are shattered. Man is like
 earthenware. He is valuable only insofar as he is productive and has the capacity to do
 constructive things (R' Mendel of Kotzk).

לֹא מִשְׁקָה אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁתֶּה בְּכָל-כְּלִי יִטְמָא: וְכֹל
אֲשֶׁר-יִפֹּל מִנְּבִלָתָם וְעָלָיו יִטְמָא תִּנּוֹר
וְכִירִים יִתֵּץ טַמְאִים הֵם וְטַמְאִים יִהְיוּ לָבָם:
לו אֶךְ מֵעֵן וּבֹר מְקוּה-מִים יִהְיֶה טְהוֹר וְנֹגַע
לז בְּנִבְלָתָם יִטְמָא: וְכִי יִפֹּל מִנְּבִלָתָם עַל-כָּל-
לח זֶרַע וְזֹרַע אֲשֶׁר יִזְרַע טְהוֹר הוּא: וְכִי יִתֵּן-
מִים עַל-זֶרַע וְנִפֹּל מִנְּבִלָתָם עָלָיו טָמֵא הוּא
לט לָבָם: וְכִי יָמוּת מִן-הַבְּהֵמָה
אֲשֶׁר-הִיא לָבָם לֹאכְלָה הִנֵּגַע בְּנִבְלָתָהּ
מ יִטְמָא עַד-הָעָרֶב: וְהָאֵכֹל מִנְּבִלָתָהּ יִכָּבֵס

food, thus "preparing" it to accept *tumah*, it remains susceptible to contamination, even if it later becomes dry. See rule (a). Furthermore, logic dictates that this "preparation" can take place only after the food has become detached from the soil, otherwise every food would become susceptible to contamination merely when it receives rainfall or is watered in the course of growing. See rule (b) (*Rashi*).

35. יִתֵּץ — *Shall be smashed*. Since these utensils are earthenware; that is why they cannot become cleansed unless they are broken (*Rashi*).

וְטַמְאִים יִהְיוּ — *And they shall remain contaminated*. Only an earthenware utensil remains irrevocably contaminated (unless the utensil is broken); a utensil of any other material can be cleansed in a *mikveh*. This clause teaches that if the owner wishes to keep contaminated vessels as they are [and put them to uses that do not require ritual purity], he may do so; he is not required to break earthenware

or immerse vessels made of other materials in order to cleanse them (*Rashi*).

36. This verse is a continuation of verse 35, which taught that a carcass contaminates anything upon which it falls. This verse gives an exception to that rule: A body of water that is connected to the ground cannot become contaminated; in fact, if the water is of the proper size, it constitutes a *mikveh*, which cleanses contaminated people or objects. However, someone or something standing in such a body of water *does* become *tamei* if he touches a carcass.

מֵעֵן וּבֹר — *A spring or a cistern*. Only water in a vessel that is detached from the ground can become *tamei*, not water on the ground (*Rashi*).

יִהְיֶה טְהוֹר — *Shall remain pure*. In addition to its simple meaning that a body of water does not become contaminated, this clause teaches that a *mikveh* cleanses those who are immersed in it (*Rashi*).

ated; and any beverage that can be drunk, in any vessel, shall become contaminated. ³⁵ Anything upon which part of their carcass may fall shall be contaminated — an oven or a stove shall be smashed — they are contaminated and they shall remain contaminated to you — ³⁶ only a spring or a cistern, a gathering of water, shall remain pure — but one who touches their carcass shall become contaminated. ³⁷ And if its carcass falls upon any edible seed that has been planted, it remains pure. ³⁸ But if water had been placed upon a seed and then their carcass falls upon it, it is contaminated to you.

³⁹ If an animal that you may eat has died, one who touches its carcass shall become contaminated until evening. ⁴⁰ And one who eats from its carcass shall immerse

וְנִגַּע בְּנֶבֶלָתָם — But one who touches their carcass. Even though a mikveh cleanses a contaminated person, if he touches a carcass while he is standing in the mikveh, he becomes tamei. [However, if he lets go of the carcass and remains immersed there, he becomes cleansed.] (Rashi).

37. טָהוֹר הוּא — It remains pure. According to Rashi, the seed remains pure because, after being severed from the ground, it had not yet come in contact with water. The element of הַכֶּשֶׁר, preparation for contamination by coming in contact with liquid, is not introduced until the next verse. See rule a and b (Rashi).

According to Rashbam, the verse speaks about an edible seed that had been moistened but was later replanted. It loses its susceptibility to tumah, since reattachment to the earth removes even tumah itself (see Terumos 9:7).

38. וְכִי יִתֵּן מַיִם — But if water had been placed. This verse is the basis for

the rule that foods can become susceptible to tumah only after having become moistened. See rule (a) above (Rashi).

39-40. Contamination of Kosher Animals

39. וְכִי יָמוּת — If ... has died. The verse speaks only of a kosher animal that died, but was not killed through kosher slaughter. Unlike the non-kosher animals, which become contaminated no matter how they died, kosher animals do not become contaminated if they were killed by means of shechitah [kosher slaughter] (Rashbam).

וְנִגַּלְתָּהּ — Its carcass. Only if one touches the carcass or its edible parts does he become tamei. But one does not become tamei if he touches non-edible parts of the carcass, such as hair, hide, horns, and hooves, after they had been removed from the animal's body (Rashi).

40. וְהֹאֲכַל מִנֶּבֶלָתָהּ — And one who eats from its carcass. The verse seems

בגדיו וטמא עד-העֶרֶב וְהִנָּשָׂא אֶת-נִבְלָתָהּ
 יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְטָמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְכָל-הַשָּׂרֵץ
 הַשָּׂרֵץ עַל-הָאָרֶץ שֶׁקֶץ הוּא לֹא יֵאָכֵל:
 כֹּל הוֹלֵךְ עַל-גָּחֹן וְכֹל הוֹלֵךְ עַל-אַרְבָּע
 עַד כָּל-מִרְבֵּה רַגְלִים לְכָל-הַשָּׂרֵץ הַשָּׂרֵץ
 עַל-הָאָרֶץ לֹא תֹאכְלוּם כִּי-שֶׁקֶץ הֵם:
 אֶל-תִּשְׁקְצוּ אֶת-נִפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם בְּכָל-הַשָּׂרֵץ
 הַשָּׂרֵץ וְלֹא תִטְמְאוּ בָהֶם וְנִטְמְתֶם בָּם:

to say that the mere act of eating from the carcass causes the contamination, even if the person does not touch or carry the meat — for example, if someone else had put the meat into the eater's throat. [This is not considered "touching" because the food comes in contact only with *בית* *הסתרים*, *hidden parts of the body*.] Such, indeed, is the law regarding the meat of a dead kosher bird (see *Rashi* to 22:8). However, the Sages derive that this law applies *only* to birds and not to animals. In our verse, therefore, the mere act of eating does not make one *tamei* unless it is accompanied by carrying the meat. If so, why does our verse speak of "eating"? The verse teaches that the meat does not contaminate a person unless it is the volume of an olive [*kezayis*] — the minimum amount when the Torah requires "eating" (*Rashi*, *Sifra*).

[The comm. to v. 32 notes that a food must be the volume of an egg to convey contamination that it has received from an *אב*, *source* of contamination. But for meat to convey its inherent *tumah* as a carcass, it is sufficient for it to have the smaller volume of an olive, which is half an egg.]
 וְהִנָּשָׂא — *And one who carries*. Only

in the case of one who *carries* the meat do his garments also become contaminated. [As noted above, even one who eats does not cause his garments to become contaminated unless he had carried the meat in the process of eating it.] If someone merely touched the meat without carrying it, he becomes contaminated, but his garments do not (*Rashi*).

41-44. Prohibition of Eating Creeping Creatures

The Torah now returns to the subject of forbidden foods, which had been interrupted by the discussion of the laws of contamination. Verse 23 had concluded the laws of larger winged creatures; this verse continues with the laws of smaller insects.

41. הַשָּׂרֵץ — *Creeping creature*. *Rashi* defines these creatures as those that are low, have short legs, and appear to creep along the ground.

וְהָיָה שֶׁקֶץ הוּא — *It is an abomination*. Earlier the Torah discussed the *tumah* aspects of these creatures; here it prohibits their consumption (*Ramban*).

לֹא יֵאָכֵל — *It shall not be eaten*. The passive voice indicates that it is

11 his clothing and remain contaminated until evening; and
41-43 one who carries its carcass must immerse his clothing and remain contaminated until evening.

⁴¹ Every creeping creature that creeps upon the ground — it is an abomination, it shall not be eaten.

⁴² Everything that creeps on its belly, and everything that walks on four legs, up to those with numerous legs, among all the creeping things that creep upon the earth, you may not eat them, for they are an abomination. ⁴³ Do not make yourselves abominable by means of any creeping thing; do not contaminate yourselves through them lest you become contaminated through them.

equally forbidden to feed them to others, even children (*Rashi*).

42. כל הולך על-זחון — *Everything that creeps on its belly.* The verse refers to snakes and worms (*Rashi*).

The early Sages were called סופרים, *those who count*, because they would count the words and letters of the Torah [and provide lists of the Torah's rules and principles, such as the Thirty-nine Labors of the Sabbath (*Tos.*)]. These Sages noted that the elongated *vav* of זחון is the midpoint of the Torah's letters (*Kid-dushin* 30b).^[1]

על-אַרבע — *On four legs.* Such as scorpions and beetles (*Rashi*).

מִרְבֵּה רַגְלִים — *With numerous legs.* A centipede (*Rashi*).

43-47. Holiness and the Laws of Kashrus

To conclude this chapter on the laws of forbidden foods, the Torah

places these laws in a new perspective. The consumption of these foods impedes a person's ability to elevate and sanctify himself, it contaminates the soul in ways that no physical examination can decipher, and it creates a barrier between the Jew and his perception of God. Small wonder that those who consume forbidden foods cannot see the logic of these prohibitions, just as one who lives on analgesics finds it strange that other people cry out in pain at stimuli that he does not feel. Painkillers dull the nerves and forbidden foods dull the spiritual antennae. [See the prefatory remarks to this chapter.]

43. בְּכֹל-הַשָּׂרֵץ — *Any creeping thing.* This general term includes all creeping beings — whether of land, sea, or air (*Rashi*, *Pesachim* 24a).

וְלֹא תִטְמָאוּ — *Do not contaminate yourselves.* The verse refers to the spiritual contamination that results

1. In his typically tart manner, R'Mendel of Kotzk commented homiletically that the midpoint — a central principle — of the Torah is that one should be vigilant of his "belly". Someone should never dare say, "I have filled my belly with knowledge, so I have the right to be satisfied with myself." A Jew may never have such an attitude!

כי אני יהוה אלהיכם והתקדשתם והייתם
קדשים כי קדוש אני ולא תטמאו את-
נפשותיכם בכל-השרץ הרמש על-הארץ:
כי אני יהוה המעלה אתכם מארץ מצרים
להיות לכם לאלהים והייתם קדשים כי
קדוש אני: זאת תורת הבהמה והעוף וכל
נפש החיה הרמשת במים ולכל-נפש
השרצת על-הארץ: להבדיל בין השמא
ובין הטהור ובין החיה הנאכלת ובין החיה
אשר לא תאכל:

מפטיר מה

מו

מז

from eating such foods (*Rashi*).

וְנִטְמַתְּ בָּם — *Lest you become contaminated through them*. If you contaminate yourselves by eating forbidden foods in This World, I will render you contaminated in the World to Come and before the Heavenly Court (*Rashi, Sifra, Yoma 39a*)

The *aleph* is missing from וְנִטְמַתְּ, so that it can be read וְנִטְמַתְּ, *lest you become dulled*. As noted in the prefatory remarks to this chapter and this passage, the consumption of forbidden foods harms one's spiritual potential. In the words of the Sages: If a person contaminates himself a little, he becomes contaminated a great deal; [if he contaminates himself] down below, he is contaminated above; in This World, he is contaminated in the World to Come. [Conversely,] *you shall sanc-*

tify yourselves and you shall become holy (v. 44): If a person sanctifies himself a little, he becomes sanctified a great deal; [if he sanctifies himself] down below, he is sanctified above; in This World, he is sanctified in the World to Come (*Yoma 39a*).¹

44. וְהִתְקַדְשְׁתֶּם... כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי — *You are to sanctify yourselves... for I am holy*. The verse stresses the special relationship between God and Israel; because God is holy there is a responsibility upon His chosen people to sanctify themselves to the greatest possible degree (*Rashi*).

If Jews make a sincere effort to sanctify themselves, God will help them by protecting them against the ever-present danger that they will unwittingly consume forbidden foods through no fault of their own (*Or HaChaim*).

1. To become holy, a person must first sanctify himself "down below". This means that the road to holiness does not begin with sublime thoughts or the study of lofty ideas. First a person must sanctify himself in the "lowly" things, such as his personal behavior, morality, and appetite. Once someone has turned himself into a decent, moral person, he can aspire to assistance from above (*Sidduro shel Shabbos*).

11 **44-47** *“For I am HASHEM your God — you are to sanctify yourselves and you shall become holy, for I am holy; and you shall not contaminate yourselves through any of the creeping things that swarms on the earth.”* ⁴⁵ *For I am HASHEM Who elevates you from the land of Egypt to be a God to you; you shall be holy, for I am holy.*

⁴⁶ *This is the law of the animal, the bird, every living creature that swarms in the water, and for every creature that creeps on the ground;* ⁴⁷ *for distinguishing between the contaminated and the pure, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.*

Because God is holy, He wants His people to be holy, so that they will be eternal, perceive their Creator, and follow in His paths. Only if they abstain from forbidden foods will this be possible (*Sforno*).

45. *הַמַּעֲלֶה אֹתְכֶם* — *Who elevates you.* The reason you were redeemed from Egyptian bondage was so that you would accept the commandments. The choice of the verb *elevate* implies that the laws of *kashrus* were instituted to elevate the nation (*Rashi*; *Sifra*, *Bava Metzia* 61b).

Since this was the reason God liberated you from Egypt, it is proper that you show your gratitude to Him by living up to His goals for you. God's purpose in delivering you was that you make yourselves great enough to recognize His greatness without an intermediary, and become holy and eternal. This goal of holiness is the reason for the laws of forbidden foods (*Sforno*).

47. *לְהַבְדִּיל* — *For distinguishing.* It

is incumbent upon a Jew to know the Torah and its laws not only in the abstract, but in its practical application. Alternatively, the Torah means to urge us to make the delicate and difficult distinctions that are often essential to carry out God's will. Must one “distinguish” between a non-kosher donkey and a kosher cow? No — the distinction between them is obvious. This commandment makes it incumbent upon us to learn how to distinguish between things that appear to be similar, such as making the subtle distinctions between purity and contamination, or discern the fraction of an inch that makes the difference between a proper kosher slaughter and an improper one (*Rashi*).

According to the Masoretic note appearing at the end of the *sidrah*, there are 91 verses in the *sidrah*, numerically corresponding to the mnemonic עֶבְדִּי [servant of God]. This alludes to Aaron who began his service of God as a Kohen in the *sidrah*. The *haftarah* begins with *II Samuel* 6:1.

נשלם סדרה שמיני בעזרת האל

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סדר תזריע

Sidrah Tazria

תזריע א-ב וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דְּבַר אֶל-בְּנֵי
יב-א-ב יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אֲשֶׁה כִּי תִזְרִיעַ וַיִּלְדָּה וְזָכָר
וְטִמְאָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כִּימֵי נִדַּת דִּוְתָהּ

XII

§ Laws of Human Contamination

Having completed a chapter dealing with the laws of *tumah* that results from dead animals, the Torah turns to *tumah* that emanates from human beings (ch. 12-15). More precisely, these laws relate only to Jews, since none of these categories of contamination apply to non-Jews, by Scriptural law. Living Jews can become *tamei* by means of certain physical conditions, bodily secretions or contact with contaminated objects. However, as noted in previous chapters, all contamination relating to animals apply only if the animal is dead; a live animal can neither become *tamei* nor transmit *tumah*.

Why are the laws of human beings discussed after those of animals? The Torah follows the pattern of Creation. Just as humans were created after animals, so too the laws of human beings follow those of animals (*Rashi; Vayikra Rabbah*).

§ Childbirth and Purification

Ibn Ezra (v.2) comments that in these chapters that deal with human contamination, the first law to be discussed is that of a woman who gives birth, because that is the beginning of life and therefore the start of the *tumah* process. The Midrash, too, begins its comments on this chapter

with several perspectives on the human condition:

On the verse, *When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male ...* (v. 2), the Midrash comments: Concerning this, Scripture states *אָחוּר וְקֶדֶם צִרְתָּנִי, Back and front You have fashioned me (Psalms 139:5)*. Reish Lakish said: *Back* means the last day [of Creation] and *front* means the first day [of Creation]. If a person is worthy, they tell him, "You came before the entire work of Creation"; but if he is not worthy, they tell him, "Even a gnat preceded you, an earthworm preceded you" (*Vayikra Rabbah* 12:2).

R' Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz commented on Reish Lakish's teaching that in the process of Creation, God added to the emerging universe day by day. Each newly created stage was to add something to what had gone before, and man was to be the final, crowning touch, who would pull all of Creation together to fulfill its purpose of spirituality and the performance of God's will. If man were not to accomplish that, then there would be no need for him; to the contrary, unbridled, greedy man harms not only his fellows but the very balance of the universe, as modern times have demonstrated all too clearly. Thus, God tells man that if he is worthy, he vindicates all of Creation, and it was for his sake that

HASHEM spoke to Moses, saying: ²Speak to the Children of Israel, saying: When a woman conceives and gives birth to a male, she shall be contaminated for a seven-day period, as during the days of her separation infirmity shall she be contami-

everything was created. Chronologically, of course, man remains the last of all the creatures, but he is "first" in significance because he is the purpose of it all. On the other hand, if man is not worthy of his calling, then, indeed, he has added nothing of substance to God's handiwork — and if so, God tells him, "Even a gnat preceded you, an earthworm preceded you. Since you did not live up to your charge, what need had I for you? To be one more living creature is not reason enough for your existence. For that I have gnats and earthworms, who are alive without contributing to the world's spiritual betterment."

We may see a similar lesson in the chapter of childbirth. The creation of human life is the most sublime phenomenon in the universe; by doing so, man and woman become partners with God Who gives a soul to their offspring. But this new life begins with *tumah*, spiritual impurity, to show people that the mere fact of life is not enough. Life must be a tool for the service of God; otherwise it is nothing. After that period of contamination comes the cleansing process, culminated by the bringing of an offering. Before the offering is brought, the new mother cleanses herself and is no longer contaminated, but she is still forbid-

den to consume sacrificial meat or *terumah*, because even the absence of contamination is not yet the fulfillment of man's goal. Cleansing is not completed until one has come to the resting place of God's presence with an offering of atonement for the past and dedication for the future.

•§ Kedushah

Nowadays it is customary that when a new mother feels well enough to leave home, she first goes to a synagogue and hears *Kedushah*, or similar part of the service. It is also customary that after the forty or eighty days when she would bring her offering (see below), her husband is given an *aliyah* [i.e., is called to the Torah] as a substitution of sorts for her offering.

These offerings and rituals symbolize that birth is the beginning of the extended privilege of raising the newborn child to the life of dedication and holiness that will enable God to say to the child and his parents, "You came before the entire work of Creation."

2. בִּימֵי נִדָּה נִדָּה — As during the days of her separation infirmity. Upon giving birth, a woman becomes *tamei* with the same regulations as those of a נִדָּה, *menstruant* (literally *niddah* means someone

ג תטמא: וביום השמיני ימול בשר ערלתו:
ד ושלשים יום ושלשת ימים תשב בדמי
טהרה בכל קדש לא תגע ואל המקדש
ה לא תבא עד מלאת ימי טהרה: ואם
נקבה תלד וטמאה שבעים כנדתה ושלשים
יום ושלשת ימים תשב על-דמי טהרה:

who is "separated"). Like a *niddah*, she must remain "separated" from marital relations and from anything that must remain in a state of ritual purity, such as the flesh of offerings. *Rashi* offers two interpretations of the word *רוּחָהּ*. His first is *her [menstrual] flow*. His second — which our translation follows because it is preferred by *Ramban* — is *her infirmity*, and it refers to the discomfort commonly felt at the onset of that condition (*Rashi*).

תטמא — *Shall she be contaminated*. The laws of *niddah* (15:19-24) apply to her, even if no flow of blood accompanied the birth (*Rashi*).

3. וביום השמיני — *On the eighth day*. Although the commandment of circumcision has already been given (*Genesis* 17:10-14), it is repeated because of the new laws in this verse: That *milah* may be performed only in the daytime, since the Torah specifies *ביום*, on the ... day (*Sifra*), and that — since the Torah specifies

that it be done on the eighth day — a child is circumcised even on the Sabbath, if that is the eighth day (*Shabbos* 132a).¹

4. ... ושלשים יום — *For thirty-three days*. After the end of the first seven days, she immerses herself to remove the *niddah* contamination, following which she assumes a new state for the next thirty-three days. Thus there is a forty-day period — the seven days following the birth and the next thirty-three days — when she is in at least a partial state of contamination, as explained below.

ה תשב בדמי טהרה — *She shall remain in blood of purity*. During this period, the "source of blood is pure" (*Rashbam*), and she does not incur the *tumah* of *niddah* in the event of a flow (*Rashi*). However, this state of purity applies only to marital relations and to unconsecrated objects. The verse goes on to say that she is in a state of minor contamination regarding priestly tithes [*terumah*] and

1. The Torah juxtaposes *milah* with *niddah*. The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 15:7) cites *Koheles* (11:2) *הן חלק לשבעה והן חלק לשמונה* (Distribute portions to seven and even to eight). This teaches that a woman who is scrupulous in her observance of the seven-day *niddah* laws will be blessed with sons, who will be circumcised on their eighth day (*Vayikra Rabbah*).

nated.³ On the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.⁴ For thirty-three days she shall remain in blood of purity; she may not touch anything sacred and she may not enter the Sanctuary, until the completion of her days of purity.⁵ If she gives birth to a female, she shall be contaminated for two weeks, as during her separation; and for sixty-six days she shall remain in blood of purity.

sacrificial objects.

The universal practice is that a woman experiencing a flow is regarded as a *niddah* (Yoreh De'ah 194:1; see Tur and Beis Yosef).

כָּל־קֹדֶשׁ — Anything sacred. The new mother has the status of someone who had been *tamei* and has immersed himself in a *mikveh*. Although the contamination has been removed, he or she may not touch or eat either *terumah* or sacrificial meat until nightfall. In the case of the new mother, she remains in this status for the full thirty-three-day period [טְבוּלַת יוֹם אַרְבֵּי], but she is allowed to touch *מַעֲשֵׂר שְׁנִי*, the second tithe, even though it has a certain degree of holiness (Rashi; Sifra).

לֹא־תִנּוֹעַ — She may not touch. Although it is forbidden for her even to touch anything sacred, as implied by the literal meaning of the phrase, R' Yochanan derives that the penalty of lashes applies only if she ate (Rashi, Yevamos 75a). However, in the view of Reish Lakish (Zevachim 33b), the penalty applies equally to eating and touching.

וְטִמְאָה שְׁבַע יָמִים — She shall be contaminated for two weeks. R' Yosef asked, "Why is the contamination only seven days after the birth of a boy and fourteen days after the birth of a girl?" He replied that when a boy is born, everyone rejoices with him; but when a girl is born, people remain sad. Maharsha explains that despite the universal joy at the birth of a child, there is a measure of sadness that the mother had to endure labor pains. When a boy is born, people are glad that he will not have to endure those pains, but when a girl is born, people are saddened that when she grows up she too will have labor pains (Niddah 31b). [Thus, in deference to joy, God removes the contamination and shortens the period when she is still forbidden to bring her offering and touch sacred food.]

R'D. Z. Hoffman suggests that the Torah removes the contamination from the mother of a boy after only seven days so that she can be purified for the *bris milah* celebration of her son.

ו ובמלאת ימי טהרה לבן או לבת תביא
בבשר בן-שנתו לעלה ובן-יונה או-תר
לחטאת אל-פתח אהל-מועד אל-הכהן:
ו והקריבו לפני יהוה וכפר עליה וטהרה
ממקור דמיה זאת תורת הילדת לזכר או
ח לנקבה: ואם-לא תמצא ידה כי שה
ולקחה שתי-תרומות או שני בני יונה אחד
לעלה ואחד לחטאת וכפר עליה הכהן
וטהרה:

6. לכן או לבת — For a son or for a daughter. I.e., forty days for a son and eighty days for a daughter.⁽¹⁾

תביא — She shall bring. She brings two offerings, an *עלה וְחַטָּאת*, elevation- and a sin-offering, because she seeks atonement for two kinds of sins: An elevation-offering atones for sinful thoughts (see pref. remarks to 1:3), and she may have had resentful thoughts against her husband or even her Creator during her labor pains (*Ibn Ezra*). The sin-offering atones for the possibility that, in her agony, she may have sworn never to live with her husband again (*Niddah* 31b).

Labor pains were decreed upon women in punishment for the sin of Eve (*Genesis* 3:16); the offering brought by women after child-

birth is to atone for that sin (*R' Bachya*).

אל-פתח אהל-מועד — To the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. As in the case of all offerings, it is meritorious for the owner to deliver it personally to the Sanctuary (*Sifra*).

7. והקריבו — He shall offer it. Even though there are two offerings, the verse uses the singular form. In the simple meaning, the verse means that the Kohen brings either of her two choices: the sheep and bird, or the two birds.

The Sages expound that the singular form teaches that only one of the offerings — the sin-offering or the elevation-offering — is a necessity in order to permit her to eat sacrificial meat. That

1. In the previous verses they are described as "male and female"; why are they now called "son and daughter"? *Meshech Chochmah* refers to the principle that until a newborn infant is thirty days old, there is still some doubt as to whether it will survive. Consequently, the verses that refer to them at birth call them male and female, because they are still too young to be regarded as sons and daughters. Here, however, when they are forty or eighty days old, respectively, the period of maximum danger is past.

⁶ Upon the completion of the days of her purity for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring a sheep within its first year for an elevation-offering, and a young dove or a turtledove for a sin-offering, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to the Kohen. ⁷ He shall offer it before HASHEM and atone for her, and she becomes purified from the source of her blood; this is the law of one who gives birth to a male or to a female. ⁸ But if she cannot afford a sheep, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young doves, one for an elevation-offering and one for a sin-offering; and the Kohen shall atone for her and she shall become purified.

offering is the sin-offering, because the verse specifies "atonement," which is the primary function of a sin-offering (Rashi, *Sifra*). [Although the commentary to the previous verse notes that the elevation-offering, too, provides atonement, there is a basic difference between the two offerings. The elevation-offering atones for a mere thought, but the sin-offering atones for an oath, which is much more severe than a thought.]

וְטוֹהָרָה — *And she becomes purified.* This is the final stage of her purification process. After the first seven or fourteen days, she immerses in a *mikveh* and becomes permissible to her husband and is purified regarding everything except for *terumah* and sacred objects. The conclusion of the forty- or eighty-day period ends her contamination regarding *terumah*, and with the offering her purity is

complete (*Sifra*; *Yevamos* 74b).

מִמֶּקֶד דְּמֵיהָ — *From the source of her blood.* Even though there had not been a flow of blood up to this time, nevertheless, the partial *tumah* that had remained with her was a vestige of the *niddah*-like contamination that she had during the first seven or fourteen days (*Daas Zekeinim*).

8. אֶחָד לְעֹלָה — *One for an elevation-offering.* The elevation-offering is mentioned first, but both in the order of consecration and the order of the Temple service, the sin-offering comes first (Rashi; *Zevachim* 90a). [The elevation-offering is mentioned first because it symbolizes the goal of the entire service: to achieve closeness to God and become dedicated to Him as represented by this offering. To sin and then be granted forgiveness is not the Jewish ideal.]

XIII

5 The Laws of Tzaraas

For hundreds of years, the popular translation of צָרַעַת [tzaraas] has been "leprosy", and it was commonly accepted that the reason for the quarantine of a suspected tzaraas and the exclusion from the camp of a confirmed מצרע [metzora], the person smitten with the malady, was to prevent the spread of the disease. R' Hirsch demonstrates at length and conclusively that both of these notions are completely erroneous. Very briefly, he shows that the symptoms of tzaraas, as outlined in our *sidrah*, are far different than those of leprosy. Furthermore, if the reason for the metzora's confinement is to prevent contagion, then some of the laws would be ludicrous. For example, if the malady covers the victim's entire body (13:13), he is not *tamei*, but if his skin begins to heal, he becomes *tamei*. In the case of a house that is afflicted (14:26), the Torah prescribes that before the house is pronounced *tamei*, all its contents should be removed, because they, too, would become contaminated if they were to be inside at the time of the pronouncement. But if there were a danger of contagion, it would be irrational for the afflicted household items to be excluded from the quarantine! In perhaps the most telling

example, the Talmud teaches that if the symptoms of tzaraas appear on a newlywed or during a festival season, the Kohen does *not* examine the affliction or declare it to be *tamei*, in order not to interfere with the celebration. But if the purpose of these laws is to prevent the spread of disease, it would be absolutely imperative to enforce the laws at times of great overcrowding and mingling!

Clearly, as the Sages teach, tzaraas is not a bodily disease, but the physical manifestation of a spiritual malaise, a punishment designed to show the malefactor that he must mend his ways. The primary cause of tzaraas is the sin of slander. As the Sages say, the word מצרע is a contraction of מוציא רע, one who spreads slander (*Arachin* 15b). Similarly, the Sages teach (*ibid.* 16a and various Midrashim) that the affliction is a punishment for the sins of bloodshed, false oaths, sexual immorality, pride, robbery, and selfishness. The pattern that emerges is that it is a Divine retribution for the offender's failure to feel the needs and share the hurt of others. God rebukes this anti-social behavior by isolating him from society, so that he can experience the pain he has imposed on others — and heal himself through repentance.^[1]

1. The previous *sidrah* ended with the detailed chapter of kosher and non-kosher animals, fowl, fish, and insects — but for eating non-kosher creatures, one is not punished with tzaraas. That awful, isolating, public rebuke by God comes in retribution for gossip and slander, the "clever" behavior that devours people and their reputations. People tend to be very careful about what they eat, but they are lax about what they say. Yet God does not bring tzaraas upon someone who devours pork, only upon someone who devours people! (R' Yisrael Salanter)

Ramban (13:7) writes that this affliction is a Divine sign to the sinner that God is displeased with his behavior, that God has removed His Presence from the sinner, and that it is time for him to examine his deeds and see what must be improved. Because this malady is in response to the victim's fall from the required degree of holiness, it occurs only in *Eretz Yisrael*, because only the Holy Land is that sensitive to the presence or absence of holiness.

In the closing paragraph of *Hil. Tumas Tzaraas*, *Rambam* writes: *Tzaraas* is a generic term that includes many matters that are unlike one another, for a whiteness on human skin is called *tzaraas*, the loss of some hair from the head or beard is called *tzaraas*, and the change of color in garments or houses is called *tzaraas*. This change, which is mentioned in connection with garments or houses — which the Torah calls *tzaraas* — is not a natural occurrence. Rather it is a miraculous sign for Jews to caution them against evil speech. For if someone speaks *lashon hara*, the walls of his house change; if he repents, his house is cleansed . . . If he remains in his wickedness, his skin changes and he develops *tzaraas*. Then he will be isolated and notorious, until he no longer engages in the

chatter of the wicked, which is scorn and slander . . . This is how wicked scorners conduct their sessions: first they overindulge in idle chatter . . . as an outgrowth of that they degrade the righteous . . . which accustoms them to speak against the prophets and attribute slander to them . . . as an outgrowth of that they speak against God and deny the essentials of faith. This is the chatter of the wicked, which was caused by sessions at the street corners, sessions at gatherings of ignoramuses, and sessions in taverns in the company of drinkers. But the conversation of worthy Jews is exclusively about Torah and wisdom. Therefore, the Holy One Blessed is He assists them and assigns them merit, as it is written: *Then those who fear HASHEM spoke to one another, and HASHEM listened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear HASHEM and give thought to His Name* (*Malachi* 3:16).^[1]

1. וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן — *And to Aaron*. Aaron is singled out in the introduction of this commandment because only a Kohen has the authority to declare whether an affliction is a *tzaraas* or not (*Ibn Ezra*). Nor did God direct Moses to convey the commandment to the entire nation, because the Kohanim would enforce compliance with these

1. *Tzaraas* was brought upon Jews during an era when the nation was great and holy — and surely much more zealous to avoid *lashon hara* than it is today. Yet now, when most people have few scruples about what they say, there is no *tzaraas*; why is this so? *Tzaraas* is a Divine warning to an essentially healthy person that he has a spiritual malaise buried within him. As much as it is a punishment, it is a blessing, because it alerts him to a problem and forces him to deal with it. But in a time when people have become spiritually degraded and the sins that cause *tzaraas* become rampant, they do not deserve this Divine reminder that something is amiss (*Alshich*).

ב אדם כִּי־יִהְיֶה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאת אוֹ-
סִפָּחַת אוֹ בְּהֶרֶת וְהָיָה בְּעוֹר־בְּשָׂרוֹ לִנְגַע
צָרַעַת וְהוּבֵא אֶל־אֶהֱרֹן הַכֹּהֵן אוֹ אֶל־
ג אֶחָד מִבְּנָיו הַכֹּהֲנִים: וּרְאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־
הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר־הַבָּשָׂר וְשָׁעַר בִּנְגַע הַפֶּה |
לָבָן וּמִרְאָה הַנֶּגַע עֵמָק מֵעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ נֶגַע
צָרַעַת הוּא וּרְאֵהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְטָמֵא אֹתוֹ:

laws. In introducing the procedure for a *metzora* to cleanse himself, the Torah does not specifically command Moses to convey it to the entire people, because any person who had been contaminated would rush with alacrity to rid himself of the contamination; there was no need to urge the people in this regard (*Ramban*).

2-3. The Basic Tzaraas and the Procedure of Verification

The first symptom of *tzaraas* is a white patch on the skin, which must be at least the size of a גְּרִיס [*g'ris*], a large bean that has been estimated to be 3/4-inch square. *Rambam* writes that it is a square patch of skin on which thirty-six by thirty-six hairs can grow. This size applies to all the different varieties of afflictions — whether on people, houses, or material — that are mentioned in the chapter (*Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 1:7). As described in the commentary to verse 2, there are two basic shades of white, and each of the two has a secondary color, making a total of four shades. Only the Kohen is authorized by the Torah to diagnose a *tzaraas* and

pronounce the malady as such. Unless a Kohen makes this pronouncement, the whiteness is not a halachic *tzaraas*, and none of these laws apply, even though a multitude of scholars and Kohanim recognize it as such. It should be noted as well that a *tzaraas* is not detectable by touch; its sole symptoms are in the discoloration of the skin (*Rambam Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 1:6-8). First (vs. 2-3) the Torah describes the basic forms of *tzaraas*, and how all four of them are determined to be *tamei*. Then the Torah goes on to discuss characteristics that tend to appear in one or another category of *tzaraas*.

2. שָׂאת אוֹ־סִפָּחַת — A *s'eis* or a *sapachas*. We transliterate the Hebrew, since there is no accurate translation of either *tzaraas* or its subdivisions.

The verse lists the various kinds of *tzaraas* afflictions, which differ from one another in their degrees of whiteness, but not in their laws (*Rashi*). *S'eis* has the whiteness of natural wool (according to the Sages), and *baheres* is the color of snow (*Negaim* 1:1).^[1]

1. There are two categories of evil speech: *Or HaChaim* comments that *Lashon hara* which is true but nevertheless forbidden, and מְרִיא שֵׁם רַע, *slander*, which is false. The *tzaraas* known as

² If a person will have on the skin of his flesh a *s'eis* or a *sapachas*, or a *baheres*, and it will become a *tzaraas* affliction on the skin of his flesh; he shall be brought to Aaron the Kohen, or to one of his sons the Kohanim.
³ The Kohen shall look at the affliction on the skin of his flesh: If hair in the affliction has changed to white, and the affliction's appearance is deeper than the skin of the flesh — it is a *tzaraas* affliction; the Kohen shall look at it and declare him contaminated.

Sapachas is not a new kind of *tzaraas*, but a secondary category. Each of the other two colors mentioned in the verse has a sub-division, which is slightly darker than the "parent," but is also an indication of contamination. Thus there are actually two kinds of *sapachas*: one *sapachas* is slightly darker than a *s'eis* — i.e., the color of an egg membrane — and the second *sapachas* is slightly darker than a *baheres* — i.e., the color of chalk. Thus, there are two major categories of *tzaraas*, each of which has a sub-category (Rambam Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 1:2).

לִנְגַע צֶרַע — A *tzaraas* affliction. It was a sign of Divine retribution. See prefatory remarks.

3. וְשֵׁעַר — If hair. At least two dark hairs inside the suspect patch had turned white after the appearance of the affliction on the skin (*Rashi*; *Sifra*). [Since the change of color occurred after the onset of the skin-whiteness, it was presumably caused

by the presumptive *tzaraas*.]

צֶמֶק — Deeper. Although the affected patch of skin is not actually lower than the surrounding skin, the discoloration makes it appear to be lower than the unaffected skin, just as a sunlit area seems to be deeper than the shaded area around it (*Rashi*; *Sifra*). [If the white patch does not appear to be deeper than the skin, it is probably only a surface discoloration and not a *tzaraas*.]

וְהִנֵּהוּ הַכֹּהֵן — The Kohen shall look at it. The verse began with the Kohen looking at the affliction, and it ends with the Kohen looking at it again. The first "look" refers to his examination of the affliction, to determine whether or not it is a *tzaraas*, then he "looks" at the circumstances of the victim, to determine whether to postpone his declaration of *tzaraas* due to a festive occasion, as noted above (*Meshech Chochmah*).⁽¹⁾

וְהִגִּידוֹ אֵת — And declare him contaminated. The Kohen must declare

baheres is in punishment for evil speech that is true — the name comes from the word *בְּהִירָת*, clarity, because the tale-bearer is concerned with clarifying the accuracy of his gossip. The untruthful form of forbidden speech is punished by *s'eis*, a name that is related to *לֹא תִשָּׂא* וְשָׂטֵן שָׂטָן, Do not bear false gossip (Exodus 23:1).

1. R' Asher of Stolin complained that when his *chassidim* came to him they would accentuate their good points and try to hide their shortcomings. "When I went to my *rebbe* [R' Shlomo

וְאִם-בַּהֲרַתְּ לְבָנָהּ הוּא בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ וְעַמֶּק
אֵין-מֵרָאָה מִן-הָעוֹר וּשְׁעָרָה לֹא-הָפֹךְ לָבָן
וְהַסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַנֶּגַע שְׁבַעַת יָמִים:
וְרָאָהּ הַכֹּהֵן בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְהָיָה הַנֶּגַע עֹמֵד
בְּעֵינָיו לֹא-פָשָׁה הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְהַסְגִּירוֹ הַכֹּהֵן
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שְׁנִית: וְרָאָהּ הַכֹּהֵן אֹתוֹ בְּיוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי שְׁנִית וְהָיָה כִּהְיָה הַנֶּגַע וְלֹא-פָשָׁה

orally, "You are contaminated" (*Rashi*; *Sifra*). Without this formal declaration there is no *tumah*, even if there is no doubt that the affliction is a *tzaraas* (*Negaim* 3:1). As noted above, this rule makes it possible to avoid the extreme inconvenience of declaring someone to be a *metzora* during a festival or during his wedding festivities; the Kohen will simply postpone the examination and declaration until the celebration is over.

Once the victim has been declared a *metzora*, he conducts himself as set forth in verses 45-46. His degree of contamination is one of the most severe. He has the regulations of a *zav*, as described in 15:4-12, in addition to which he contaminates everything inside a building or under a shelter into which he enters (*Keilim* 1:4).

4-8. Baheres

It should be stressed that all laws of *tzaraas* apply equally to all four shades of white (*Sifra*, *Negaim* 1:3). However, the Torah states some laws

in connection with *baheres*, and some in connection with *s'eis*, because some characteristics occur more often in one category than another (*Malbim*). This passage discusses the symptoms of contamination that tend to appear in the *baheres* affliction and its secondary *sapachas* shade of white.

4. וְעַמֶּק אֵין-מֵרָאָה מִן-הָעוֹר. — *And its appearance is not deeper than the skin.* *Rashi* writes that he does not understand this statement. The commentators explain that since verse 3, as explained by *Rashi*, is based on the fact that a white spot always appears to be lower than the surrounding area, how is it possible that the white patch mentioned in our verse does not seem lower? In answer to this question, *Ramban* comments that only a glossy white appears to be lower than the skin, but not a dull white.

The Mishnah (*Negaim* 3:3), which does not mention deepness, indicates that the prime determinant is whether or not the hair turns white.

of Karlin], I would tell him what was wrong with me so that he would help me improve myself. Is a *rebbe* like God that he can reward someone's good deeds? A *rebbe* must be shown someone's *weaknesses* so that he can evaluate them and help deal with them, just as someone with possible *tzaraas* goes to the Kohen to show his afflictions."

⁴ If it is a white baheres on the skin of his flesh, and its appearance is not deeper than the skin, and its hair has not changed to white, then the Kohen shall quarantine the affliction for a seven-day period. ⁵ The Kohen shall look at it on the seventh day, and behold! — the affliction retained its color, and the affliction did not spread on the skin, then the Kohen shall quarantine it for a second seven-day period. ⁶ The Kohen shall look at it again on the seventh day, and behold! — if the affliction has dimmed and the affliction has not spread

Malbim suggests that the primary factor, as given by the Mishnah, is indeed that the affliction is intense enough to change the color of the hair; Scripture mentions the deepness of its appearance only as a further description of the condition. If it cannot change the color of the hair, then it will not appear to be deep either.

אֶת־הַנֶּגַע . . . וְהִסְגִּיר — Shall quarantine the affliction. The afflicted person must remain in a room for the entire week (Rashi; Ibn Ezra).

Daas Zekeinim interprets that the *metzora* is not forbidden to leave his room, but that the Kohen will not see him again for a week. Thus, as far as the Kohen is concerned, the affliction is quarantined for a week.

Others, however, hold that the person is not quarantined. The Kohen "isolates" the suspect patch of skin from the rest of the victim's body by drawing a line around it, so that he will be able to tell at a glance whether or not the affliction has become larger during the next seven days (Tur; Rosh).

During his period of quarantine, the suspected *metzora* is indeed *tamei*

to the same degree as if he were a confirmed *metzora*. Although his *tumah* is the same, however, he is not required to leave his hair unshorn and he does not tear his clothing, nor must he bring any offerings if he is later declared not to be a *metzora* (Megillah 8b).

5. עָמַר בְּעֵינָיו — Retained its color. [The translation follows Rashi and Onkelos.] I.e., as long as the affliction is still within the four shades of white that constitute *tzaraas*, it is considered to be unchanged (Gur Aryeh). *Levush* derives this from the plural form בְּעֵינָיו, literally, its colors, implying any of the colors of *tzaraas*.

Ramban renders in his eyes, meaning that in the Kohen's judgment it has not spread. If, however, it does spread, he declares it to be *tamei*.

6. כָּהָה הַנֶּגַע — The affliction has dimmed. According to Rashi, in order for the affliction to become pure, both conditions are necessary: The color has dimmed [i.e., it became darker, even though it was still one of the four shades of *tzaraas* (Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh)] and it has not spread.

הַנֶּגַע בְּעוֹר וְטָהָר הַכֹּהֵן מִסְפַּחַת הוּא וְכִבֵּס
בְּגָדָיו וְטָהָר: וְאִם-פִּשָּׁה תִּפְשֶׁה הַמִּסְפַּחַת
בְּעוֹר אַחֲרֵי הִרְאָתוֹ אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן לְטָהָרְתּוֹ
וְנִרְאָה שְׁנִית אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהָנִה
פִּשְׁתָּהּ הַמִּסְפַּחַת בְּעוֹר וְטָמְאוּ הַכֹּהֵן
צָרַעַת הוּא:

ט נֶגַע צָרַעַת כִּי תִהְיֶה בְּאָדָם וְהוּבָא אֶל-
י הַכֹּהֵן: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהָנִה שְׁאֵת-לִבְנָהּ בְּעוֹר
וְהִיא הַפֶּכֶה שֶׁעַר לִבָּן וּמַחִית בְּשָׂר חֵי
יא בְּשֵׂאֵת: צָרַעַת נוֹשֶׁנֶת הוּא בְּעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ

[But cf. Ramban, *Negaim* 2:8 and *Megillah* 8b.]

However, according to Rambam (*Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 1:11), if the color changes but remains within the spectrum of the four shades of *tzaraas*, it is not considered to be a valid change, since all four have the same status. Rather, our verse gives two conditions, either of which is sufficient to render the affliction pure: (a) The affliction became darker than any of the four shades of white, in which case the affliction is pure even if it spreads; or (b) it does not spread, in which case it is pure even if it is still one of the four shades of white.

מִסְפַּחַת — *A mispachas*. It is a skin disease of some sort, but not a *tzaraas* (*Rashi*).

וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהָר — *He shall immerse his garments and become pure*. Since the verse speaks of him as becoming pure — even though he had never been declared a *metzora* — it is obvious that the fact of his quarantine renders him *tamei* and requires

him to immerse himself and his garments (*Rashi*).

[The verse specifies only his garments because the fact that he contaminates even his garments reveals the extent of his contamination.]

8. וְטָמְאוּ הַכֹּהֵן — *The Kohen shall declare it contaminated*. [However, in addition to the spread of the affliction, it must also have the color of *tzaraas* in order to be declared contaminated.]

9-17. S'eis

As noted above, the laws of *tzaraas* apply equally to all shades, but some physical characteristics occur more frequently in some shades than in others. This passage discusses the symptoms of contamination that are commonly found in the case of *s'eis* and its *sapachas*, i.e., secondary category.

9. נֶגַע צָרַעַת — *A tzaraas affliction*. Verse 2 gave the two primary forms of *tzaraas*, which were *baheres* and *s'eis*. The previous verses discussed *baheres* and the symptoms

on the skin, then the Kohen shall declare him pure, it is a *mispachas*; he shall immerse his garments and become pure.⁷ But if the *mispachas* should spread on the skin after it had been shown to the Kohen for its purification, it should be shown to the Kohen again.⁸ The Kohen shall look, and behold! — the *mispachas* has spread on the skin; the Kohen shall declare it contaminated; it is *tzaraas*.

⁹ If a *tzaraas* affliction will be in a person, he shall be brought to the Kohen. ¹⁰ The Kohen shall look, and behold! — it is a white *s'eis* on the skin, and it has changed hair to white, or there is healthy, live flesh within the *s'eis*: ¹¹ It is an old *tzaraas* in the skin of his

most common to it. Now the Torah goes on to *s'eis* and its usual symptoms.⁽¹⁾

10. שָׁאָה — *S'eis*. As noted above, *s'eis* is the color of natural white wool, and according to *Rashi* and *Rambam*, it appears to be lower than the surrounding skin. *Ramban* and *Ravad*, however, hold that *s'eis* appears to be higher than the skin. Significantly, the verses speaking about *s'eis* do not mention anything about the *s'eis* being deeper, thus seeming to imply that it is different from the *baheres* discussed above, which are described as appearing to be below the surrounding skin.

וְיִמָּצֵא בְּשָׂרָהּ — Healthy, live flesh.

In contrast to the dead, desensitized flesh of *tzaraas* (*Ibn Ezra*). The affliction itself remains white, but the healthy flesh inside it has returned to the victim's normal skin color (*Rosh* to *Negaim* 4:2).

Either indication — white hair or live skin — is sufficient to prove that the affliction is *tzaraas* (*Rashi*; *Sifra*). *Bertinoro* (to *Rashi*) proves this point from the juxtaposition in this verse of the two symptoms. Since we know from verse 3 that white hair is proof of contamination, it is reasonable to assume that healthy flesh, too, is sufficient proof.

11. עֲרֵצֶת נוֹשָׁנָה — An old *tzaraas*. Notwithstanding the surface appear-

1. This passage speaks of an affliction that will be in the person, an expression that is different than that used in verse 4, which speaks of an affliction that is on the skin. The affliction that is the topic of this passage is called *s'eis*, a word that is related to הִתְנַשְּׂאוֹת, which refers to sovereignty and loftiness. This suggests that this particular kind of *tzaraas* is in punishment for arrogance, which makes one feel superior to others and leads him to disdain them and their rights. Such an affliction, therefore, demonstrates that there is a character flaw that is in the person; it is not merely a matter of outward behavior. Therefore, one of its symptoms reveals that there is an inner rot in the person; there is an old *tzaraas* in the skin of the flesh, meaning that there is a defect within this person that festers below the surface. Arrogance corrupts his attitudes even when he tries to hide it (*Sifsei Kohen*).

וּטְמֵאוֹ הַכֹּהֵן לֹא יִסְגְּרוּנוּ כִּי טָמֵא הוּא:
יב וְאִם-פְּרוּחַ תִּפְרָח הַצִּרְעָת בְּעוֹר וּכְסָתָה
הַצִּרְעָת אֶת כָּל-עוֹר הַנֶּגַע מֵרָאשׁוֹ וְעַד-
יג רִגְלָיו לְכָל-מֵרָאָה עֵינֵי הַכֹּהֵן: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן
וְהִנֵּה כְסָתָה הַצִּרְעָת אֶת-כָּל-בָּשָׂרוֹ וְטָהַר
יד אֶת-הַנֶּגַע כֻּלּוֹ הִפָּךְ לָבָן טָהוֹר הוּא: וּבַיּוֹם
טו הִרְאֹת בּוֹ בָּשָׂר חַי יִטְמָא: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן
אֶת-הַבָּשָׂר הַחַי וּטְמֵאוֹ הַבָּשָׂר הַחַי טָמֵא
טז הוּא צִרְעָת הוּא: אֹךְ כִּי יָשׁוּב הַבָּשָׂר הַחַי

ance of improving health, there is an old, festering *tzaraas* underneath the apparently healthy skin (*Rashi*).

12. וְאִם-פְּרוּחַ תִּפְרָח — *If ... will erupt*. The doubled expression in the Hebrew teaches that even if the eruption over the entire body took place slowly, in several stages — not all at once — the person is still rendered pure (*Sifra*).

— וּכְסָתָה הַצִּרְעָת אֶת כָּל-עוֹר הַנֶּגַע — *And the tzaraas will cover the entire skin of the affliction*. Two things happen here. The affliction on the original area — *the entire skin of the affliction* — is still a *tzaraas* color; and, secondly, the *tzaraas* spreads until it covers his entire body *from his head to his feet*. Then, paradoxically, the person is declared to be pure, even though *tzaraas* covers his entire body. But if the originally afflicted area had changed to a darker, non-*tzaraas* color, and the surrounding areas had

turned *tzaraas*-white, then, indeed, the person is *tamei* because of the *tzaraas* on the rest of his body (*Ramban*).

— לְכָל-מֵרָאָה עֵינֵי הַכֹּהֵן — *Wherever the eyes of the Kohen can see* [lit. *the entire vision of the Kohen's eyes*]. This disqualifies a Kohen with defective vision [or a Kohen who can see with only one eye] from ruling on a *tzaraas* (*Rashi, Sifra*). See also commentary to verse 14.

13. כֻּלּוֹ הִפָּךְ לָבָן — *Having turned completely white*.

The spread to the entire body shows that the affliction is superficial; since it does not penetrate deeply, it is on the verge of healing, and presumably will get darker and disappear (*Tur; Paane'ach Raza*). However, *R' Bachya* likens this law to that of *Parah Adumah* [the Red Cow] (*Numbers* ch. 19), as a decree of the Torah, which is beyond human understanding.^[1]

1. *R' Hirsch* notes that this law refutes the "contagion theory" of *tzaraas*. If the purpose of the quarantine is to prevent spread of a feared disease, then an affliction that covers the entire body should be the most dangerous of all! Rather the reason for the purity in this case is

13 flesh and the Kohen shall declare him contaminated; he
12-16 shall not quarantine him, for he is contaminated.

¹² If the tzaraas will erupt on the skin, and the tzaraas will cover the entire skin of the affliction from his head to his feet, wherever the eyes of the Kohen can see — ¹³ the Kohen shall look, and behold! — the affliction has covered his entire flesh, then he shall declare the affliction to be pure; having turned completely white, it is pure. ¹⁴ On the day healthy flesh appears, it becomes contaminated. ¹⁵ The Kohen shall look at the healthy flesh and declare it contaminated; the healthy flesh is contaminated, it is tzaraas. ¹⁶ But if the healthy flesh changes again

14. גביוס — *On the day.* There are some days when the affliction may be shown to the Kohen for his ruling and other days when the Kohen will not look at it. If is a festival season or the seven-day-celebration period of a bridegroom, the Kohen postpones his examination of the affliction in order not to cause the rejoicing to be disrupted (*Rashi, Sifra*).

בשר חי — *Healthy flesh.* That live flesh is a proof of contamination has been stated previously; this verse adds a new dimension to that law. The Sages derive that a Kohen can judge an affliction only if he can see all of it once; if, however, the affliction has the minimum size of a *g'ris*, but it curls around a finger or some other limb so that at least a *g'ris* is not visible at the same time, it cannot be declared *tamei*. The same applies

to an area of live skin. Such live skin must have the minimum area of an *עין שטה*, lentil (*Rambam Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 3:1*), and if it curls around a finger so that it cannot be seen all at once, the live skin cannot render the affliction to be *tamei*. What if the victim gained so much weight that now the finger has become chubby enough for the healthy skin to be viewed all at once? To teach that the affliction is declared *tamei* in that case as well, our verse adds the superfluous reference to healthy skin, i.e., even that case of newly visible healthy skin makes the affliction *tamei* (*Rashi; Sifra*).

או כי ישוב — *But if ... changes again.* No matter how many times the same affliction shows new signs of contamination or purity, it is judged anew each time (*Sifra*).

because God considers the offender so anti-social that even his removal from the camp will not be enough to induce him to repent. The only way to shock him into self-evaluation is to tell him, in effect, "You are so degraded that there is no hope for you." Then, as his *teshuvah*-process begins and he starts to heal, he is declared contaminated once more, and sent out to renewed isolation, because that is the way to further his repentance until his spiritual rehabilitation is complete.

יז וְנִהְפָּךְ לְלֶבֶן וְכֹא אֶל-הַכֶּהֱן: וְרָאָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן
וְהִנֵּה נִהְפָּךְ הִנָּע לְלֶבֶן וְטָהַר הַכֶּהֱן אֶת-
הִנָּע טָהוֹר הוּא:

יח וּבִשָּׁר כִּי-יִהְיֶה בּוֹ-בְעִרְוֵי שֹׁחִין וְנִרְפָּא: וְהָיָה
בַּמָּקוֹם הַשֹּׁחִין שְׂאֵת לִבְנֶה אוֹ בַּהֲרֵת לִבְנֶה
כ אַדְמַדְמַת וְנִרְאָה אֶל-הַכֶּהֱן: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן
וְהִנֵּה מִרְאָהוּ שְׁפַל מִן-הָעוֹר וְשַׁעֲרֵה הַפֶּה
לָבֵן וְטִמְאָו הַכֶּהֱן נִגְע-צָרַעַת הוּא בַּשֹּׁחִין
כא פָּרָחָה: וְאִם יִרְאֶנָּה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה אֵין-בָּהּ
שַׁעַר לָבֵן וְשִׁפְלָה אֵינָנָה מִן-הָעוֹר וְהִיא כְּהָה
כב וְהִסְגִּירוּ הַכֶּהֱן שְׁבַעַת יָמִים: וְאִם-פָּשְׂעָה

18-28. Inflammations and Burns

For the purposes of this passage, any wound to the flesh, whether it was caused by illness or a blow, is known as a שֹׁחִין, *inflammation*. As long as it has not healed and is still oozing fluid, it cannot be adjudged a *tzaraas*, even though it may have some of the symptoms. Once it is completely healed, even if the skin remains slightly discolored, it is treated like the afflictions described above. If, however, it has begun to heal and a thin layer of skin has formed over the wound, it is the "inflammation" that is discussed in verses 18-23.

If the wound resulted from a burn or from heated metal or glowing coals, it is a מִקְנַת אֵשׁ, *burn from fire*. As in the case of an inflammation, there is no *tzaraas* while the wound is open, and after it is healed, it is treated like normal skin. Once it has begun to heal, it is treated according to the laws given in verses 24-28

(Rambam Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 5:1-3).

However, the redness that is mentioned in this passage refers to all sorts of *tzaraas* afflictions, not only to those developing on burns and wounds (ibid. 1:4). Thus, the Torah mentions redness only in connection with inflammations and burns because redness is most common in such cases, not because it applies only to them.

The difference between these and the previous afflictions is that in the earlier cases there were two seven-day quarantines (v. 5); here, there is only one. See verse 23.

יח וְנִרְפָּא. — *And it will have healed.* In the context of these laws, *healing* means that a scab has formed. It is only then that the distinctive laws of this passage apply (Negaim 9:2; Rambam ibid. 5:3).

יח בַּמָּקוֹם הַשֹּׁחִין. — *On the place of the inflammation.* In order for it to be an indication of *tzaraas*, the whiteness

13 and turns white, he shall come to the Kohen.¹⁷ The Kohen shall look at it, and behold! — the affliction has changed to white, the Kohen shall declare the affliction pure; it is pure.

17-22

¹⁸ If flesh will have had an inflammation on its skin, and it will have healed, ¹⁹ and on the place of the inflammation there will be a white *s'eis* or a white *baheres*, streaked with red; it shall be shown to the Kohen.²⁰ The Kohen shall look, and behold! — its appearance is lower than the skin, and its hair has turned white: The Kohen shall declare it contaminated; it is a *tzaraas* affliction that erupted on the inflammation.²¹ But if the Kohen looks at it, and behold! — there is no white hair in it, and it is not lower than the skin, and it is dim; the Kohen shall quarantine him for a seven-day period.²² If it spreads

must appear after the scab (*Sifra*).

אֶרְקַחֶמָּה — *Streaked with red*. This redness is very slight. It varies from as little as the redness caused by two drops of blood falling into a cup of milk to as much as a maximum of sixteen drops in a cup. *Rambam* and *Raavad* disagree on which degree of redness applies to which of the four shades of basic whiteness (*Rambam*, *Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 1:4).

As noted above, this degree of redness applies as well to the conditions discussed earlier in the chapter. As long as the primary color is one of the four basic whites, a tinge of red does not change its status (*ibid.*).

On the same word **אֶרְקַחֶמָּה** in verse 49, *Rashi* comments that it is *deep red*. The doubled second syllable of the word indicates that it is not the normal color, but depending on the context, it can be either a deep red as in verse 49, or a light red as in our verse. In the case described in our verse, it is impossible for the

redness to be deep, because it is the equivalent of only a few drops of blood in a relatively large quantity of milk (*Shem Olam*).

שָׁפֵל — *Lower*. The verse uses the term *lower* instead of **שָׁפֵל**, *deeper*, as in verse 4, because the redness of the affliction would make it appear to be not as deep as one that is completely white (*Ibn Ezra*, v. 4; *Malbim*).

וְהָיָא כְּהָא — *And it is dim*. Although it is dimmer than the whiteness of *baheres*, the kind of *tzaraas* mentioned in verse 19, it must still fall within the range of the four shades of *tzaraas*. If it were to be even darker than those shades, the affliction is not even subject to quarantine (*Ralbag*).

וְאִם פָּשָׁה תִּפְשָׁה — *If it spreads*. The double expression teaches that any spread is sufficient to render it *tamei*, meaning that if it had not spread by the seventh day and the

תִּפְשֶׁה בְּעוֹר וְטִמָּא הִכְהֵן אֹתוֹ נִגַּע הוּא:
וְאִם-תַּחֲתִיָּה תַעֲמֹד הַבְּהֵרֶת לֹא פִשְׁתָּהּ כה
צָרַכְתָּ הַשְּׁחִין הוּא וְטִהְרוּ הִכְהֵן: או
בְּשָׂר בִּי-יִהְיֶה בְּעָרוֹ מִכּוֹת-אֵשׁ וְהִיָּתָה
מִחֵית הַמִּכָּה בַּהֲרֹת לְבָנָה אֲדַמְדַּמְתָּ או
לְבָנָה: כה וְרָאָה אֹתָהּ הִכְהֵן וְהֵנָּה נִהְפָּךְ שַׁעַר
לָכֵן בַּבְּהֵרֶת וּמִרְאָהָ עֵמֶק מִן-הָעוֹר צָרַעַת
הוּא בַּמִּכָּה פָּרַחָה וְטִמָּא אֹתוֹ הִכְהֵן נִגַּע
צָרַעַת הוּא: כו וְאִם יִרְאָנָה הִכְהֵן וְהֵנָּה אֵין-
בַּבְּהֵרֶת שַׁעַר לָכֵן וּשְׁפִלָּה אֵינָנָה מִן-הָעוֹר
וְהוּא כֹהָה וְהִסְגִּירוּ הִכְהֵן שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:
כו וְרָאָהּ הִכְהֵן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי אִם-פָּשָׂה
תִּפְשֶׁה בְּעוֹר וְטִמָּא הִכְהֵן אֹתוֹ נִגַּע צָרַעַת
כה הוּא: וְאִם-תַּחֲתִיָּה תַעֲמֹד הַבְּהֵרֶת לֹא-
פִשְׁתָּהּ בְּעוֹר וְהוּא כֹהָה שְׁאֵת הַמִּכָּה הוּא
וְטִהְרוּ הִכְהֵן כִּי-צָרַכְתָּ הַמִּכָּה הוּא:

Kohen had consequently declared the affliction not to be a *tzaraas*, but it spread on the eighth day, it is *tamei* (*Sifra*).

בְּעוֹר — *On the skin*. As verse 19 makes clear, this form of *tzaraas* involves only the scab area of the inflammation (*Negaim* 9:2); consequently the “skin” of this verse refers only to the area of the inflammation, but not the surrounding healthy skin. Any discoloration of the surrounding skin would be judged as a new, separate affliction, which would be evaluated according to the rules given in verse 1-17 (*Ralbag*, see *Negaim* 9:2).

23. צָרַכְתָּ הַשְּׁחִין — *The scarring of the inflammation*. If the affliction did not spread during the seven-day quarantine, no new period of isolation is required. The Kohen rules immediately that it is not a *tzaraas*, but a scar left by the inflammation (*Rashi*). This is the difference between this sort of affliction and those described in verses 1-17: In the earlier cases, there were two periods of quarantine before the suspicion of *tzaraas* was eliminated; here there is only one.

24-28. Burns

The laws of this *tzaraas* are identi-

13 on the skin; the Kohen shall declare it contaminated; it is an affliction. ²³ But if the baheres remains in place without spreading, it is the scarring of the inflammation; the Kohen shall declare it pure.

²⁴ If a person will have a burn from fire on his skin; and the healed skin of the burn is a white baheres that is streaked with red or is all white. ²⁵ The Kohen shall look, and behold! — hair has turned white in the baheres, and its appearance is deeper than the skin, it is tzaraas that erupted on the burn, the Kohen shall declare it contaminated; it is a tzaraas affliction. ²⁶ And if the Kohen looks at it and behold! — there is no white hair in the baheres, and it is not lower than the skin, and it is dim; the Kohen shall quarantine him for a seven-day period. ²⁷ The Kohen shall look at it on the seventh day: If it has spread on the skin, the Kohen shall declare it contaminated; it is a tzaraas affliction. ²⁸ But if the baheres remains in its place without spreading on the skin, and it is dim, it is a s'eis of the burn; the Kohen shall declare it pure, for it is the scarring of the inflammation.

cal to those of the inflammation above. It is mentioned separately only to teach that even if a burn and an inflammation are right next to one another, they must be evaluated separately, and not in combination. As noted in the prefatory remarks to this chapter, an affliction must have the minimum size of a g'ris to qualify as a tzaraas. Thus, if a burn and a wound adjoin one another, and afflictions develop on each, they cannot be combined for the purposes of having the minimum size. If neither is at least one g'ris in size, they are both pure, even if the two of them

combined would be big enough (Rashi; Sifra).

29-44. Tzaraas of the Head or Face

The essence of the first affliction in this passage, known as *nesek*, is that it causes a loss of hair in the middle of the scalp or the beard. It must be a bald spot that is completely surrounded by hair. According to *Rash* (*Negaim* 10:10), another characteristic of *nesek* is that it is a hair loss of a temporary nature, but most commentators do not share this view. This bald patch, like all other potential tzaraas afflictions discussed above,

תזריע חמישי
כט יג/כט-לא
וְאִישׁ אֹד אִשָּׁה כִּי־יִהְיֶה בּוֹ נֶגַע בְּרֹאשׁ אֹ
בִקְוֹ: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּגַע וְהָנָה מֵרָאֹהוּ
עִמָּק מִן־הָעוֹר וּבֹ שְׁעַר צָהָב דֶּק וְטָמֵא אֹתוֹ
הַכֹּהֵן יִנְתֵּק הוּא צָרַעַת הָרֹאשׁ אֹ הַנֶּגַע הוּא:
וְכִי־יִרְאֶה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־נֶגַע הַנֶּתֶק וְהָנָה אֵין־ לא
מֵרָאֹהוּ עִמָּק מִן־הָעוֹר וְשְׁעַר שָׁחַר אֵין בּוֹ
וְהִסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־נֶגַע הַנֶּתֶק שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:

must be at least the size of a *g'ris*. [If the baldness appears at the front or back of the head, the laws are different, and are found below, verses 40-43.] The color of the patch is immaterial and no discoloration of any sort is necessary, according to the consensus of commentators. *Rambam*, however, holds that the patch must have the whiteness of regular *tzaraas*, or at least some other discoloration. In fact, even a white patch the color of any of the four *tzaraas* shades is not *tamei* at all if it occurs in the hairy area of the head or scalp. In addition, the appearance of white hairs is not a proof of contamination in this case. In these major respects, the *tzaraas* of the scalp or beard is unique. The only way such parts of the body can be host to *tzaraas* is if they have a hair loss and have the symptoms given in this passage. A *nesek* can have two quarantine periods and it can have two proofs of contamination: the emergence of short golden hairs or a spread of the affliction (*Ramban*; *Rambam*, *Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 8:1-2; *Kessef Mishneh* 5:8).

29. וְאִישׁ אֹ אִשָּׁה — *A man or a woman*. The earlier passages of this

chapter do not specify men or women, but use the general term אָדָם, *person*. Since our passage speaks of *tzaraas* in the beard area, it is necessary to include women specifically, or one might have assumed that they are not subject to this form of *tzaraas*. The mention of women means that if a woman has these symptoms on her face, she can be judged to have the *tzaraas* of *nesek* (*Or HaChaim*; *Rambam Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 8:1).

בְּרֹאשׁ אֹ דִקְוֹן — *On the scalp [lit. head] or in the beard*. These laws apply only to baldness in the areas where hair had once grown, hence our translation of *scalp*, rather than *head*. As long as the hair is still there, the scalp and beard area are not subject to the laws of *tzaraas*.

Since the verse uses the word *or*, rather than the inclusive *and*, the Sages derive that one *nesek* patch on the head and another on the face cannot be combined to achieve the necessary size of a *g'ris* (*Sifra*).

30. מֵרָאֹהוּ עִמָּק — *Its appearance is deeper*. Throughout the chapter, this term means that the affliction has turned white, thus making it seem

13 ²⁹ A man or a woman in whom there will be an affliction, on the scalp or in the beard: ³⁰ The Kohen shall look at the affliction, and behold! — its appearance is deeper than the skin, and within it is weak, golden hair; the Kohen shall declare it contaminated, it is a *nesek*, a *tzaraas* of the head or the beard.

³¹ But if the Kohen looks at the *nesek* affliction, and behold! — its appearance is not deeper than the skin, but there is no dark hair within it; the Kohen shall quarantine the *nesek* affliction for seven days.

deeper than the surrounding, darker skin. However, as noted above in the prefatory remarks, the color is not a determining factor in deciding the contamination of a *nesek*. The next verse states explicitly that even if the appearance is not deeper, the bald patch may still be *tamei*. In the simple meaning of the verse, the Torah mentions deepness of color only because the *tzaraas* described in this case is commonly accompanied by a whitening of the skin, even though this condition has no bearing on its *tzaraas* status (R' David Hoffman).

The Sages derive from this usage that the Torah means to liken the affliction of *nesek* to that of the earlier afflictions which turn white and appear to be deeper than the skin. Just as those afflictions are caused by God, so the *nesek* must be caused by God. But if the baldness was caused by illness or a depilatory, or the hair was plucked, the laws of *nesek* do not apply (*Sifra*).

שָׁעַר זָהָב — *Golden hair*. Two golden hairs prove contamination only if they appear after the onset of the baldness (*Rashi*; *Sifra*; cf. *Negaim*

10:2,4). According to *Rambam* (*ibid.* 8:5), however, even prior golden hair is proof of *tzaraas*, if it later becomes surrounded by a bald spot.

נָקַךְ — *Weak*. The golden hair must be short, according to R' Akiva, as understood by *Rambam* and *Rosh*. Other commentators say it must be *thin*, as well. If the hair is long, it is not a proof of contamination, even if it has changed from the natural color of the hair. R' Yochanan ben Nuri holds that it must be *thin*, and that length is immaterial (*Sifra*; *Negaim* 10:1).

נֶקֶק הָיָא — *It is a nesek*. This is the name of *tzaraas* of the scalp or beard area (*Rashi*). It is the *tzaraas* affliction that caused the hair loss (*Sforno*).

וְשָׁעַר שְׁחֹר אֵין בּוֹ — *But there is no dark hair within it*. Hair of any color except gold exempts the bald patch from *tumah*, even if the hair is an unnatural color (*Sifra*).

There must be two dark hairs to establish that the baldness is not *tamei*. The hairs must be inside the bald patch, but not at its very edge. If dark hairs are present, the patch is not a *tzaraas* even if it has all the proofs of *tumah*, such as two golden

ב וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַנֶּגַע בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְהָיָה
לֹא-פֶשַׁה הַנֶּתֶק וְלֹא-הָיָה בּוֹ שַׁעַר צָהָב
ג וּמֵרָאָה הַנֶּתֶק אֵין עֵמֶק מִן-הָעוֹר: וְהִתְגַּלַּח
וְאֶת-הַנֶּתֶק לֹא יִגְלַח וְהִסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-
ד הַנֶּתֶק שִׁבְעַת יָמִים שְׁנִית: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן
אֶת-הַנֶּתֶק בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְהָיָה לֹא-פֶשַׁה
הַנֶּתֶק בָּעוֹר וּמֵרָאָהוּ אֵינֶנּוּ עֵמֶק מִן-הָעוֹר
ה וְטָהַר אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן וְכִבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְטָהַר: וְאִם-
פ פֶּשַׁה יִפֹּשַׁה הַנֶּתֶק בָּעוֹר אַחֲרֵי טָהֲרָתוֹ:
ז וְרָאָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וְהָיָה פֶּשַׁה הַנֶּתֶק בָּעוֹר
ח לֹא-יִבָּקֵר הַכֹּהֵן לְשַׁעַר הַצָּהָב טָמֵא הוּא:

hairs and it spreads (*Rambam, Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 8:6*).

32. וְלֹא-הָיָה בּוֹ שַׁעַר צָהָב. — *And no golden hair was in it.* Neither symptom of *tumah* appeared during the seven-day quarantine. But if the bald patch had either spread or developed a golden hair, it would be *tamei* [as implied by verses 35-36] (*Rashi*).

33. וְהִתְגַּלַּח. — *Then he shall shave himself.* Although the literal meaning of the word is that he should shave himself; the Sages expound that it is not necessary for the person to shave himself; anyone may do it. [The sense of the term is that he should arrange to have himself shaved.] The verse means to imply that it does not matter who shaves him. This is unlike the law of a confirmed *metzora* (14:9) who must be shaven by the Kohen. But in the

case of this person who is being prepared for quarantine, it does not matter who shaves him (*Sifra*).

The victim of the affliction must be shaven all around the potential *nesek*, with a strip of two hairs left surrounding it on all sides. This enables the Kohen to tell conclusively if the *nesek* has spread during the second quarantine (*Rashi; Sifra*).

☞ The Large Gimel

The *gimel* of וְהִתְגַּלַּח is oversized. The Talmud (*Kiddushin 30a*) states that this letter indicates the Torah's halfway mark in verses. However *Minchas Shai* and others note that the generally accepted halfway mark of the Torah is at 8:7, and that is the verse which is noted in all editions of the Torah. It may be that, as the Talmud there notes, there are different versions of how the

13 ³² The Kohen shall look at the affliction on the seventh day and behold! — the nesek had not spread and no golden hair was in it, and the appearance of the nesek is not deeper than the skin — ³³ then he shall shave himself, but he shall not shave the nesek; and the Kohen shall quarantine the nesek for a second seven-day period. ³⁴ The Kohen shall look at the nesek on the seventh day, and behold! — the nesek had not spread on the skin, and its appearance is not deeper than the skin, the Kohen shall declare him pure, and he shall immerse his clothing and he is pure.

³⁵ But if the nesek shall spread on the skin after it has been declared pure, ³⁶ the Kohen shall look at it, and behold! — the nesek has spread on the skin: the Kohen need not examine it for a golden hair, it is contaminated.

phrases of the Torah are divided into verses.^[1]

וְאֶת־הַנֶּסֶק לֹא יגלח — But he shall not shave the nesek. Obviously he cannot shave the nesek since it is already bald. Rather he is not to shave all the way to the nesek, but he must leave at least two hairs surrounding it (Rashi, Sifra).

34. וְכִבֵּשׁ בְּגָדָיו — And he shall

immerse his clothing. See commentary to verse 6.

35. וְאִם־פָּשַׁה יפשה — But if... shall spread. Although the verse mentions this law only in connection with a spread of the nesek after the person has been declared pure, the law is the same if the nesek spreads [or develops golden hair (Sifra)] during the first or the second week (Rashi; Sifra).

1. The *gimel* in וְהִתְגַּלַּח, he shall shave himself, is oversized. The commentators offer many lessons and allusions taught by this *gimel*, which has a numerical value of three. Among them are the following:

There are three categories of people who are required to shave their hair: a *metzora* when he cleanses himself (14:9); a *nazir* (Numbers 6:9,18); and the Levites when they were first consecrated (ibid. 8:7).

The requirement that a cleansing *metzora* shave himself with a razor supersedes three negative commandments against shaving the beard in that manner: the general commandment not to do so (19:27; the specific prohibition that a Kohen may not do so (21:5); and the prohibition that a *nazir* may not do so (Numbers 6:5).

The *gimel* emphasizes this verse — verse 33 — an allusion to the law that during *Sefirah*, it is permitted to take a haircut on Lag B'Omer, and that it is permitted to take a haircut during the three days before Shavuot (Otzar Chaim).

The widespread customs to give boys their first haircut at the age of three, or on Lag B'Omer in their third year, is based on this word that alludes to cutting the hair in *gimel*, the third year (Arizal).

תזריע לו ואם-בְּעִינָיו עֹמֵד הַנֶּתֶק וְשָׁעַר שָׁחַר
 יג/לז-מב צָמַח-כּוֹ נִרְפָּא הַנֶּתֶק טָהוֹר הוּא וְטָהֲרוּ
 לח הַכֹּהֵן: וְאִישׁ אֶו-אִשָּׁה כִּי-
 יִהְיֶה בְּעוֹר-בְּשָׂרָם בִּהְרֹת בִּהְרֹת לְבָנָת:
 לט וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהֵנָּה בְּעוֹר-בְּשָׂרָם בִּהְרֹת
 כֶּהוֹת לְבָנָת בִּהֶק הוּא פָּרַח בְּעוֹר טָהוֹר
 ששי [שלישי] מ הוּא: וְאִישׁ כִּי יִמְרֹט רֹאשׁוֹ
 מא קָרַח הוּא טָהוֹר הוּא: וְאִם מִפָּאֵת פָּנָיו
 מב יִמְרֹט רֹאשׁוֹ גִּבָּח הוּא טָהוֹר הוּא: וְכִי-
 יִהְיֶה בְּקִלְחָתוֹ אוֹ בְּגִבָּתוֹ נִגַּע לָבָן אֲדַמְדָּם

37. — But if the *nesek* has retained its appearance. The reference cannot be to color since, as noted above, color is immaterial in the case of a *nesek*. Rather the verse is saying that even though the contaminating symptoms are still in place — it is not smaller and it still has golden hair — its contamination is removed if two dark hairs grow inside the bald spot (*Malbim*).

Although the verse speaks only of hair that is *black*, any color except for blond suffices to remove the contamination (*Rashi; Sifra*).

It is pure; the Kohen shall declare it pure. — *It is pure; the Kohen shall declare it pure.* Only if it is truly pure does the Kohen's declaration remove the contamination from it, but if the Kohen erred in thinking it was pure, his declaration has no validity (*Rashi; Sifra*).

38-39. בֹּהֶק / An Uncontaminated Discoloration

In a seemingly incongruous interpolation between the laws of two kinds of *tzaraas* on the scalp, the

Torah now describes a non-*tzaraas* skin affliction that can appear anywhere on the body, and that is totally unrelated to the preceding or following passages. *R' Hirsch* explains why the insertion is necessary at this point. *Nesek*, whose laws have just been concluded, is the first *tzaraas* that is not dependent on the color of the malady. This could lead us to think that color is not the primary determinant of *tzaraas*. If so it would seem logical to assume that a *bohak*, too, might be considered *tamei*. Even though it lacks the color of *tzaraas* — like a *nesek* — it has many similarities to afflictions that are *tamei*. Therefore the Torah emphasizes here that *bohak* is not comparable to *nesek*.

38. — *Spots*. This word should not be confused with the similar word *baheres* (v. 4), which is used as the name of a particular kind of *tzaraas*. There it is used to refer to the extreme whiteness of the affliction.

39. — *Dim white*. The color is darker than that of an egg

13 ³⁷ But if the *nesek* has retained its appearance, and dark hair has sprouted in it, the *nesek* has healed — it is pure; the Kohen shall declare it pure.

³⁸ If a man or woman have spots in the skin of their flesh, white spots; ³⁹ the Kohen shall look, and behold! — on the skin of their flesh are dim white spots, it is a *bohak* that has erupted on the skin, it is pure.

⁴⁰ If the hair of a man's head falls out: he is bald at the back of the head, he is pure. ⁴¹ And if his hair falls out toward the front of his head, he is frontally bald, he is pure. ⁴² And if in the posterior or frontal baldness there shall be a white affliction streaked with red:

membrane, which is the darkest of the four *tzaraas* colors. Since it is too dark too be a *tzaraas*, it must be a simple skin discoloration, known as a *bohak*.

בהק — *Bohak*. It is like the whiteness or brightness that appears in the complexion of a ruddy or freckled person. The surrounding reddish skin accentuates the *bohak* and makes it appear to be whiter than it really is (*Rashi*).

40-44. נִבְחָח וְקָרַח/Baldness at the Front and Back of the Head

In case someone loses all the hair of the back half of his head [*karachas*], of the front half of his head [*gabachas*], or of his beard, the newly bald skin is treated like skin anywhere else on his body. It is subject to contamination according to the rules of ordinary *tzaraas* — color and growth — with one exception: the presence or absence of a white hair is immaterial. As noted in the prefatory remarks to verse 29, the distinguishing characteristic of *nesek* is that its bald patch is surrounded by hair; here,

however, all the hair in the affected area falls out (*Ramban* to v. 29).

Although the passage does not mention the beard, there is a tradition that it has the same rule (*Sifra*, *Rambam Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 8:12).

40. קָרַח הוּא קְדוֹר הוּא — *He is bald at the back of the head, he is pure*. This loss of hair is not a *nesek*, and he is not contaminated by virtue of short hair and spreading (as in vs. 31-32). The bald skin can have *tzaraas* only if it develops one of the four shades of white, and the contamination is proven by healthy skin within the affliction, and by spreading (*Rashi*).

[Although, according to our editions, *Rashi* adds that a white hair is an indication in this case, this is undoubtedly an erroneous interpolation that was inserted by later printers. It is not found in early editions of *Rashi*, and neither the *Mishnah* nor *Sifra* make any mention of hair. The commentators explain that white hair does not grow on a bald area.]

42. אֶדְמָקָם — *Streaked with red*. Although only this color is men-

צָרַעַת פְּרִיחַת הוּא בְּקִרְחָתוֹ אוֹ בְּגִבְחָתוֹ;
וְרָאָה אֹתוֹ הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה שְׂאֵת-הַנֶּגַע לְבָנָה
אֲדַמְדָּמֶת בְּקִרְחָתוֹ אוֹ בְּגִבְחָתוֹ כְּמֵרָאָה
צָרַעַת עוֹר בְּשָׂר׃ אִישׁ-צָרוּעַ הוּא טָמֵא
הוּא טָמֵא יִטְמָאֵנוּ הַכֹּהֵן בְּרֹאשׁוֹ נִגְעוֹ;
וְהִצְרוּעַ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע בְּגָדָיו יִהְיוּ פְרָמִים
וְרֹאשׁוֹ יִהְיֶה פָרוּעַ וְעַל-שִׂפְפֹם יַעֲטֶה
וְטָמֵא וְטָמֵא יִקְרָא׃ כָּל-יָמֵי אֲשֶׁר הַנֶּגַע בּוֹ
יִטְמָא טָמֵא הוּא בְּדָד יֵשֵׁב מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה

tioned specifically, all four colors and all the rules of verses apply here as well. This is derived from the next verse, which likens this *tzaraas* to "the appearance of *tzaraas* on the skin of the flesh" (*Rashi*). [As in earlier cases in this chapter, this sort of mixed color may be most characteristic of this form of *tzaraas*, and is therefore mentioned.]

43. שְׂאֵת-הַנֶּגַע — *A s'ei's affliction.* Although *s'ei's* is only one of the four varieties of *tzaraas*, it is mentioned here because it is the one that commonly appears on bald spots (*Malbim*).

44. אִישׁ-צָרוּעַ הוּא — *He is a person with tzaraas.* In all previous cases, the Torah speaks of the affliction — it is *tamei* or it is pure. Only here does the Torah speak of the person as being a *metzora*. It is the way of the merciful God that, when He punishes a person, He prefers to do so in a way that will not cause him public humiliation. Let the sinner know and repent, but let him not be humiliated unnecessarily. The *tzaraas* of bald-

ness is different. Its location is such that everyone sees the affliction and knows that God has withheld His mercy from the sinner. Apparently, he has sinned in a grievous manner. This is indicated by the Torah's description of him. *He is a person with tzaraas* — not the milder course of speaking not about him but about the area of affliction (*Or HaChaim*).

45-46. The Metzora's Isolation

The list of human *tzaraas* afflictions has been concluded and the Torah goes on to the laws relating to the behavior required of the *metzora*. The rules of his isolation from the community are given in the next two verses, and they apply to all the cases in this chapter. The procedure of his cleansing ritual once his affliction has healed is given in the next *sidra*.

45. יִהְיוּ פְרָמִים — *Shall be torn.* The Torah wants the *metzora* to conduct himself in a distinctively bizarre manner, or to dress and conduct himself like a mourner. The purpose of this requirement is so that the sinner will be influenced to grieve

13 It is an eruption of tzaraas on his posterior or frontal baldness. ⁴³ The Kohen shall look at it, and behold! — there is a s'eis affliction that is white streaked with red, in his posterior or frontal baldness, like the appearance of tzaraas on the skin of the flesh. ⁴⁴ He is a person with tzaraas, he is contaminated; the Kohen shall declare him contaminated; his affliction is upon his head.

⁴⁵ And the person in whom there is the affliction — his garments shall be torn, the hair of his head shall be unshorn, and he shall cloak himself up to his lips; he is to call out: "Contaminated, contaminated!" ⁴⁶ All the days that the affliction is upon him he shall remain contaminated; he is contaminated. He shall dwell in isolation; his dwelling shall be outside the camp.

over the behavior that has brought the punishment of tzaraas upon him, and repent (*Ibn Ezra*).

There are three opinions regarding the sort of tearing that the word פָּרִימָה implies. According to *Rashi* (*Sotah* 7a), the garment must be torn many times. *Radak* maintains that the garment is torn along a seam. *Malbim* holds that the tear is only on a hem.

יָעֻטָהּ — Shall cloak himself. It was customary for a mourner to pull his collar or scarf over his lips and to pull his cloak over his head. The *metzora* was also forbidden to greet people, but he was permitted to study and discuss the Torah (*Moed Kattan* 15a; *Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 10:6).

וְקָמָא וְקָמָא — He is to call out: "Contaminated, contaminated!" He must warn people to stay away from

him lest his *tumah* contaminate them (*Rashi*; *Sifra*). The Talmud (*Moed Kattan* 5a) adds that another purpose of his proclamation is to inform others of his anguish so that they will pray for him.¹⁾

46. אֲשֶׁר הִנָּע בוֹ — That the affliction is upon him. The implication is that the contamination exists only so long as the tzaraas is actually on his body, but if he were to have it removed surgically, he could go through the purification process given in ch. 14 (*Sifra*). However, since the Torah forbids the removal of a tzaraas affliction (*Deuteronomy* 24:8), the Sages decreed that its willful removal cannot be used to purify the *metzora* (*Negaim* 7:4-5).

בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשָּׁב — He shall dwell in isolation. There were three "camps" in the Wilderness: the Camp of the Pres-

1. Just as a *metzora* is required to proclaim his affliction to everyone within earshot, so, too, anyone who is afflicted by illness or misfortune should let others know about it so that they will pray for him (*Shabbos* 67a).

תזריע מז מוֹשְׁבוֹ: וְהִפְגֵּד כִּי־יְהִיָּה בּוֹ נִגְעַת
 יג/מז-נא מח צָרַעַת בְּבִגְד צֶמֶר אוֹ בְּבִגְד פְּשָׁתִים: אוֹ
 בִּשְׂתִי אוֹ בְּעֶרֶב לַפְּשָׁתִים וְלִצְמֹר אוֹ בְּעוֹר
 מט אוֹ בְּכָל־מְלֹאכֶת עוֹר: וְהָיָה הַנֶּגַע יִרְקַק |
 אוֹ אֲדָמָהּ בְּבִגְד אוֹ בְּעוֹר אוֹ־בִשְׂתִי
 אוֹ בְּעֶרֶב אוֹ בְּכָל־כְּלִי־עוֹר נִגְעַת צָרַעַת הִוא
 נ וְהָרָאָה אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַנֶּגַע
 נא וְהִסְגִּיר אֶת־הַנֶּגַע שְׁבַעַת יָמִים: וְרָאָה אֶת־
 הַנֶּגַע בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי כִּי־פָשָׁה הַנֶּגַע בְּבִגְד
 אוֹ־בִשְׂתִי אוֹ־בְּעֶרֶב אוֹ בְּעוֹר לְכָל אֲשֶׁר־
 יַעֲשֶׂה הָעוֹר לְמִלְאכָה צָרַעַת מִמֶּאֱרַת הַנֶּגַע

ence, which included the Tent of Meeting and its Courtyard; the Camp of Levites, who dwelled around the Tabernacle; and the Israelite Camp. A person who had become contaminated through a corpse could not enter the area of the Tabernacle; a *zav* or a *zavah* (see ch. 15) was forbidden to enter the Levite Camp as well; only a *metzora* was excluded from all three camps. In *Eretz Yisrael*, all cities that were walled in the time of Joshua had the status of the Israelite Camp, and a *metzora* was excluded from them. Thus the isolation of this verse means that people with lesser kinds of contamination are not to be in his company (*Rashi, Pesachim 67a*).

According to *Malbim*, *metzoraim*

are allowed to associate with one another, as indicated by the *haftarah* of *Metzora*, which tells of four such people who were together as a group.⁽¹⁾

47-58. נִגְעֵי בְּגָדִים / Afflictions of Garments

Afflictions on garments and houses are not natural phenomena. If that did not influence him to repent, he would suffer an affliction on his body. They appeared only during the time when the Jewish nation was generally in perfect accord with God and was a fitting host to His Presence. When an individual broke ranks with this role and was no longer worthy of this exalted rank, then God would signal this fall by

1. The Sages taught: Why is the *metzora* singled out to live in isolation? Because his affliction is a punishment for slander, which causes husband to be separated from wife and friends from one another. Therefore it is fitting that he be punished through isolation from society (*Rashi; Arachin 16b*). The ultimate purpose of "a punishment that fits the crime" is to make the sinner aware of what he did and what it has brought upon him. Such reflection should lead him to repent.

⁴⁷ If there shall be a tzaraas affliction in a garment, in a woolen garment or a linen garment, ⁴⁸ or in the warp or the woof of the linen or the wool; or in leather or in anything fashioned of leather; ⁴⁹ and the affliction shall be deep green or deep red, in the garment or the leather, or the warp or the woof, or in any leather utensil: It is a tzaraas affliction, and it shall be shown to the Kohen. ⁵⁰ The Kohen shall look at the affliction; and he shall quarantine the affliction for a seven-day period. ⁵¹ if he sees the affliction on the seventh day, that the affliction has spread in the garment or in the warp or in the woof or in the leather — for whatever purpose the leather has been fashioned — the affliction is a malignant tzaraas;

afflicting his possessions with ugly discolorations. (Ramban; Sforzo).

47-48. The Categories of Garments and Materials that Accept Tzaraas

Woolen or linen garments — all garments or useful implements of these materials, including such items as curtains and sails. These materials become *tamei* only if they have not been dyed, and only if they are owned by Jews.

Warp and woof — The warp is the threads that run across the length of the fabric. The threads that are crisscrossed at right angles through the warp are the woof. By speaking of the warp and woof, which are not yet a finished fabric but are ready to be woven into one, the Torah teaches that finished threads of wool and linen accept tzaraas (Rambam Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 13:8).

Leather — a dressed hide that has not been cut and sewn into a garment; it must, however, be designated for some practical use, such as

tent covers or blankets. Only skins of land animals can accept tzaraas, in accord with the general rule that aquatic creatures do not become *tamei* (Keilim 17:13).

Anything fashioned of leather — any finished leather garment or utensil.

49. יִרְקַק אוֹ אֶדְמָם — Deep green or deep red. See commentary to verse 19.

50. וְהִקְיִר — And he shall quarantine. The item should be put away in a room or closet for a week (Rashi, v. 4). According to Rosh (cited by Tur, v. 5), the Kohen draws a mark around the afflicted area so that he will be able to tell after seven days whether or not it has spread.

51. צֶרַע מְמָאֵרָה — A malignant tzaraas. The word has the connotation of causing pain. [Sefer HaZikaron explains that the owner suffers the "pain" of a monetary loss when the garment with the affliction is destroyed.] Alternatively, the word carries the connotation of curse,

נב טָמֵא הוּא: וְשָׂרָף אֶת-הַבֶּגֶד אוֹ אֶת-הַשְּׂתִי |
אוֹ אֶת-הָעֶרֶב בַּצֹּמֶר אוֹ בַּפְּשָׁתִים אוֹ
אֶת-כָּל-כְּלֵי הָעוֹר אֲשֶׁר-יִהְיֶה בּוֹ הַנִּגְעַ
כִּי-צִרְעַת מִמָּאֶרֶת הוּא בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרָף: וְאִם
יֵרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה לֹא-פָשָׁה הַנִּגַּע בַּבֶּגֶד אוֹ
בַּשְּׂתִי אוֹ בַּעֲרֵב אוֹ בְּכָל-כְּלֵי-עוֹר: וְצִוָּה
הַכֹּהֵן וּלְבָסוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ הַנִּגַּע וְהִסְגִּירוּ
שְׁבַע-יָמִים שְׁנִית: וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אַחֲרֵי |
הַכֶּבֶס אֶת-הַנִּגַּע וְהִנֵּה לֹא-הִפֹּךְ הַנִּגַּע
אֶת-עֵינּוֹ וְהִנֵּה לֹא-פָשָׁה טָמֵא הוּא בָּאֵשׁ
תִּשְׂרָפֶנּוּ פִּחְתָּת הוּא בְּקִרְחָתוֹ אוֹ בְּגִבְחָתוֹ:
נו וְאִם רָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְהִנֵּה כָּהֵה הַנִּגַּע אַחֲרֵי

שביעי [רביעי] נה

since the item should be burned, without any use made of it (*Rashi; Sifra*).

52. בַּצֹּמֶר אוֹ בַּפְּשָׁתִים — *Of the wool or of the linen. If the garment has hems [or other ornamentation] made of materials other than wool or linen, those parts of the garment need not be burned (Rashi, Sifra).*

הוּא בָּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרָף — *It shall be burned in fire.* Exegetically, the Sages interpret the word הוּא, *it*, as a limitation on what must be burned: only it must be burned, but not something else. One might have thought that the owner should bring more pieces of wool or linen to burn with the afflicted garment [to make for a better fire]. If this were so, the first phrase of the verse *לְבָסוּ אֶת-הַבֶּגֶד ... בַּצֹּמֶר אוֹ בַּפְּשָׁתִים*, would be rendered: *He shall burn the garment with the wool or with the linen.* To avoid this error,

the Torah specifies that only the garment must be burned, but nothing else is burned with it (*Rashi, Sifra*).

54. אֶת אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ הַנִּגַּע — *The area of the affliction.* He washes the area of the affliction itself and the immediately adjoining area (*Rashi; Sifra*). The word כֶּבֶס can mean either to immerse in a mikveh to cleanse the garment of contamination, or to wash, depending on the context (*Rashi* to v. 58). Our verse cannot mean immersion, because the garment is not being cleansed of *tumah*; it is being quarantined, during which time it is still *tamei*.

55. לֹא-הִפֹּךְ הַנִּגַּע אֶת-עֵינּוֹ — *The affliction has not changed its color.* The verse specifies that if the color has not lost its intensity, the item is *tamei* even if it has not grown in size. If it has grown, therefore, it is surely *tamei*. If the color has changed from

it is contaminated.⁵² He shall burn the garment, or the warp or the woof, of the wool or of the linen, or any leather utensil in which the affliction may be; for it is a malignant tzaraas, it shall be burned in fire.

⁵³ But if the Kohen shall look, and behold! — the affliction had not spread in the garment, or the warp or the woof; or in any leather utensil, ⁵⁴ the Kohen shall instruct them to wash the area of the affliction; and he shall quarantine it for a second seven days.

⁵⁵ The Kohen shall look after the affliction has been washed, and behold! — the affliction has not changed its color and the affliction has not spread, it is contaminated, you shall burn it in fire; it is a penetrating affliction in his worn garment or in his new garment. ⁵⁶ But if the Kohen shall look, and behold! — the affliction grew dimmer after being

bright green to bright red or vice versa, there is a difference of opinion in *Sifra*. One opinion holds that since both are colors of tzaraas, the change of color is merely an extension of the previous affliction, and it is *tamei*. The other opinion is that the new color constitutes a different affliction, and it requires a new period of quarantine (*Rashi* according to *Gur Aryeh*).

הוא פְּקַחַת — It is a penetrating affliction. The translation follows *Rashi* (as understood by *Malbim* and *Korban Aharon*), and means that the affliction has not changed because it has penetrated deeply into the material. *Onkelos*, *Ibn Ezra*, *Radak*, and others derive the word from פָּחַת, less, meaning that the affliction is destructive.

בְּקִרְחָתוֹ אוֹ בְּנִבְרָחָתוֹ — In his worn garment or in his new garment.

These same terms are used above regarding human tzaraas (v. 42), where they refer to baldness. By using identical terms, the verse teaches that in one aspect, garments have the same law as people. This law refers to a change of color, i.e., if the entire garment changes to red or green, it loses its *tumah*, just as a person who turns completely white is no longer *tamei* (v. 13). In the simple meaning of the verse, the word קִרְחַת means both an old garment and baldness at the back of the head, because the word means back or end. Thus it can refer to either the back of the head or the end of something's usefulness. The word נִבְרַחַת means both a new garment and frontal baldness because the word refers to the "front" or the "beginning" of something's useful life (*Rashi*; *Sifra*).

56. בָּהָה — Grew dimmer. It changed

הַכֶּבֶס אֹתוֹ וְקָרַע אֹתוֹ מִן-הַבֶּגֶד אוֹ מִן-
הָעוֹר אוֹ מִן-הַשָּׂתִי אוֹ מִן-הָעֶרֶב: וְאִם-
תִּרְאֶה עוֹד בִּבְגֶד אוֹ-בְשָׁתִי אוֹ-בְעֶרֶב אוֹ
בְּכָל-כְּלִי-עוֹר פִּרְחַת הוּא בְּאֵשׁ תִּשְׂרֹפוּ
אֹת אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ הִנֵּגְעָה: וְהַבֶּגֶד אוֹ-הַשָּׂתִי אוֹ-
הָעֶרֶב אוֹ-כָל-כְּלִי הָעוֹר אֲשֶׁר תִּכְבֵּס וְסָר
מֵהֶם הִנֵּגְעָה וְכִבֵּס שֵׁנִית וְטָהָר: זֹאת תוֹרַת
נִגְעַ-צֹרֶעַת בִּגְד הַצֹּמֵר | אוֹ הַפְּשֹׁתִים אוֹ
הַשָּׂתִי אוֹ הָעֶרֶב אוֹ כָל-כְּלִי-עוֹר לְטָהָרוֹ
לְטִמְאוֹ:

from a deep shade of red green to a lighter shade (*Sifra*). Since it had turned another shade of red or green, the garment has not become *tahor* and the afflicted area must be burned. If, however, it had changed to a color other than red or green, it would be completely pure (*Korban Aharon*)

57. אֹת אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ — *That which contains.* The entire garment must be burned [assuming it is all wool or linen. If it has portions of other materials, see commentary to verse 52.] (*Rashi*).

58. וְסָר מֵהֶם הִנֵּגְעָה — *And then the affliction left them.* If the affliction

disappeared during the seven-day isolation period of verse 54, the question of whether there was a *tzaraas* affliction has been resolved favorably. However, the very fact that the garment required isolation rendered it contaminated; consequently the garment requires immersion (*Rashi*).

59. ... וְזֹאת תוֹרַת — *This is the law ...* In concluding the chapter of *tzaraas*, the Torah juxtaposes *Torah* with *tzaraas* affliction. This teaches that if one has earned the punishment of *tzaraas*, let him occupy himself with Torah study, because the Torah is a spiritual fire, and fire purges impu-

13 washed, he shall rip it from the garment or from
57-59 the leather, or from the warp or from the woof.⁵⁷ If
it appears again in the garment or in the warp or in
the woof, or in any leather utensil, it is an eruption; you
shall burn in fire that which contains the affliction.
⁵⁸ But if the garment or the warp or the woof or any
leather utensil had been washed and then the affliction
left them; it shall be immersed again and it becomes
pure.

⁵⁹ This is the law of the tzaraas affliction, a gar-
ment of wool or linen, or the warp or the woof, or any
leather utensil; to declare it pure or to declare it
contaminated.

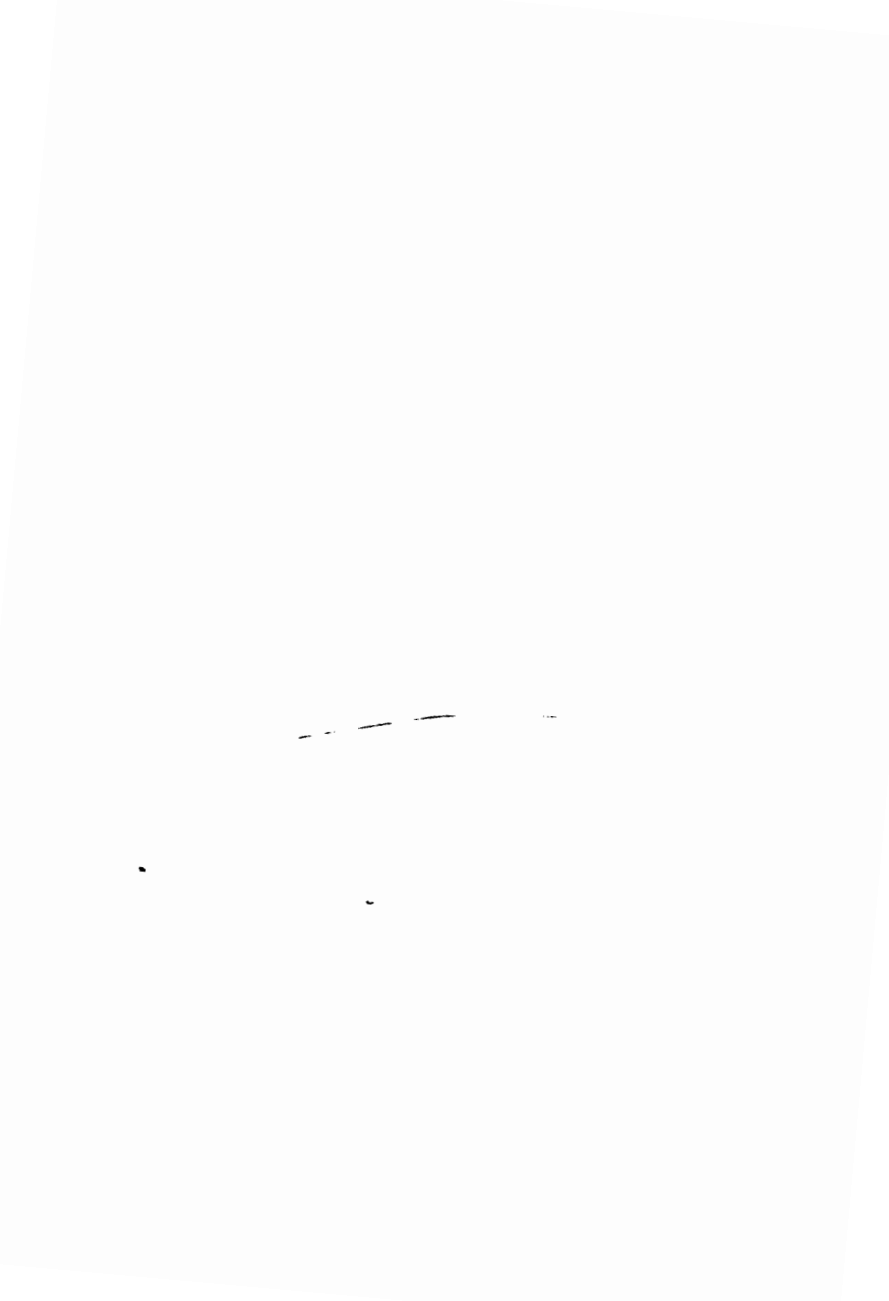
rity (see Numbers 31:23). The last
words of the *sidrah* are *to declare it
pure or to declare it contaminated*,
which suggests that the person who
studies Torah absorbs the potential
for purity, but the one who neglects it
opens the door to impurity (Sifsei
Kohen).^[1]

According to the Masoretic note appearing

at the end of the *sidrah*, there are 67 verses in
the *sidrah*, numerically corresponding to the
mnemonic בְּנֵיָהּ [her children]. This alludes to
the beginning of the *sidrah*, which deals with
a woman who gives birth. Since the Hebrew
word for child בֵּן is derived from בָּנָה, to build,
it also alludes to the lesson that children are
the builders of the future. The *Haftarah*
begins with II Kings 4:42. In years when
Tazria and *Metzora* are combined, the *haf-
tarah* is that of *Metzora*.

נשלם סדרה תוריע בעזרת האל

1. The Sages teach that even a one-day-old child is subject to the laws of *tzaraas*, but how is
it possible that a completely innocent infant is "punished" with an affliction that results from
anti-social behavior? The punishment is only for the parents. But there is nothing that is so
effective in forcing parents to improve themselves than the graphic demonstration that their
shortcomings are affecting their beloved newborn (R' Hirsch).



סדר מצורע §

§ Sidrah Metzora

מצורע א-ב וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: וְזֹאת תַּהְיֶה
 יד/א-ג תּוֹרַת הַמַּצְרֵעַ בְּיוֹם טְהָרָתוֹ וְהוּבָא אֶל-
 ג הַכֹּהֵן: וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וּרְאָה
 הַכֹּהֵן וְהָיָה נִרְפָּא נִגַע-הַצֹּרֶעַת מִן-הָעָרוֹץ:

XIV

17-8. The First Stage of the Metzora's Purification

The unique laws of the *metzora* have established that, despite the fact that his contamination is manifested in a change on his body, his degraded status is not as a result of physical, but of spiritual circumstances. No other *tumah* requires the declaration of a Kohen to take effect and no other *tumah* can be postponed as a matter of convenience, if a festival or a wedding celebration would be disrupted by it. This proves to the *metzora* that his behavior and not his body needs improvement. Of all contaminated people, only the *metzora* is excluded from the entire camp of his contemporaries and, like a corpse, he contaminates everything in a building that he enters. But if he will remain in an enclosed area with a ten-handbreadth partition around him, and enters the synagogue before anyone else, he is considered to be in a separate place and does not contaminate the other people in the room. This, too, proves that his *tumah* is caused by his anti-social activity — he is to be isolated from human contact because he has shown himself to be a socially destructive person.

Being alone outside the camp gives him the opportunity to reflect on his deficiencies and to repent so that he

can once more become worthy of becoming part of his nation. As soon as that change takes place within his mind and heart, the same God Who afflicted him will remove the mark of his degradation and he can begin the process of return (R' Hirsch).

The *metzora* becomes purified in a two-stage process that is unique to him. The first stage involves a ritual that was performed outside the camp with two birds. It was not a sacrificial service, and the birds did not have to be doves or turtledoves, since they were not offerings. They had to be healthy and kosher, but that was all. When that ritual was completed, the *metzora* was permitted to enter the camp, although he was still *tamei* and some of his restrictions remained in force. After a one-week waiting period, he could bring the remaining set of offerings and complete his process of purification.

2. בְּיוֹם טְהָרָתוֹ — On the day of his purification. Since the Torah mentions that his purification takes place during the day, the Sages expound that the Kohen's declaration, which alone renders the *metzora* pure, may be made only during the day (Rashi, *Sifra*).

Furthermore, the Kohen may make this declaration on the same day his symptoms disappear, unlike people with a seminal or menstrual

HASHEM spoke to Moses saying: ² *This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification. He shall be brought to the Kohen.* ³ *The Kohen shall go forth to the outside of the camp; the Kohen shall look, and behold! — the tzaraas had been healed from the metzora.*

discharge (15:13), who must count seven days before they can be rendered pure (*Sifra*).

As indicated by the rest of the passage, the *metzora* is not actually pure until a lengthy ritual is completed, but he becomes eligible to begin the process when the Kohen declares that the symptoms of *tzaraas* have disappeared.

וְהוֹבִיֵּא אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן — *He shall be brought to the Kohen.* The *metzora* had been required to remain outside the inhabited camp (13:46), and as indicated by the next verse, even now he was not permitted to enter for the Kohen to view him. Rather, he was brought to the outskirts of the camp where it would be easier for the Kohen to come out and meet him (*B'chor Shor, Sforino*).

It is preferable that the same Kohen who ruled on the *metzora's* contamination should be the one to determine that he has recovered (*Rambam, Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 11:6*).

3. וְהָיָא הַכֹּהֵן — *The Kohen shall go forth.* Only a Kohen who was allowed to be in the camp is permitted to declare the *metzora* to be pure, because the Torah states that the Kohen goes forth from the camp.

This teaches that a Kohen who is himself a *metzora* is not eligible to rule on the symptoms of *tzaraas* (*Sifra*).⁽¹⁾

וְנִרְפָּא — *Had been healed.* It is not necessary for the affliction to disappear entirely, without a trace. It is sufficient if the symptoms of contamination are gone, i.e., if the white hair or the patch of healthy flesh disappear (*Sifra*).

¶ Birds and Symbols

Although the following verses speak of the *metzora* becoming purified, this is true only in a relative sense: he loses part of his severe *tzaraas* contamination, but will not become completely purified until the end of the complete process, which takes over a week. Specifically, the following elements of impurity are removed in the first stage: He is permitted to enter the Israelite camp, and the *metzora* himself no longer contaminates an entire building merely by being under its roof. However the *metzora* himself is still *tamei*, though to a lesser degree, so whatever he wears will become *tamei*. Instead of becoming an **אָב הַטְּמֵאָה**, primary level or source of

1. The *metzora* had suffered the extreme humiliation of being exiled from his family and neighbors. Now that he has repented, God honors him. Whoever sees a holy Kohen go to the trouble of leaving the camp will escort him. Younger Kohanim will go along to learn how afflictions are to be judged. The result is that a multitude of people will see that the erstwhile *metzora* has repented and is once more worthy of their respect (*Sifsei Kohen*).

מְצֹרֵעַ וְיָצָה הַכֹּהֵן וְלָקַח לַמִּטְהָר שְׁתֵּי-צִפְּרִים
 חַיֹּת טְהוֹרוֹת וַעַץ אֲרָז וּשְׁנֵי תוֹלַעַת וְאָזָב:
 וְיָצָה הַכֹּהֵן וְשָׁחַט אֶת-הַצִּפּוֹר הָאֶחָת אֶל-
 כְּלִי-חָרֶשׁ עַל-מֵי חַיִּים: אֶת-הַצִּפּוֹר הַחֲיָה
 יָקַח אֹתָהּ וְאֶת-עֵץ הָאֲרָז וְאֶת-שְׁנֵי הַתּוֹלַעַת

tumah, as they had been previously, his clothing, bedding, and riding equipment will become only a ראשון לטמאה, first level of contamination. Furthermore, they will not become *tamei* if he merely moves or carries them without touching them; they must come in contact with his body (Keilim 1:1, Rambam, Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 11:1).

To remove the remaining vestiges of contamination, he — and the clothing he wears during the next seven days — will require immersion again.

4. וְיָצָה הַכֹּהֵן וְלָקַח — *The Kohen shall command that ... there be taken.* Although the literal meaning of the verse would imply that the Kohen commands and the Kohen does the “taking”, as well, the halachah is that anyone may take the birds. *The Kohen shall command* that someone take the birds and bring them to him (*Sifra*).

Although the two birds should be similar in size and appearance, the better of the two is the one that is slaughtered (see below). If so, the taking may be indeed done by the Kohen, meaning that he must choose between the two, which will be slaughtered and which will be sent away. Alternatively, the Kohen may be named in the verse only to honor him as the one in charge of the

purification process, but he is not required to be involved in taking or choosing the birds (*Or HaChaim*).

צִפְּרִים — *Birds.* Because his affliction came in punishment for the chatter of gossip and slander, his purification is effected by means of chirping, twittering birds (*Rashi, Arachin* 16b).

חַיֹּת טְהוֹרוֹת — *Live, clean.* The birds must be free of a defect that would make them טרפה, meaning birds with an illness or defect that would cause them to die within twelve months, and they must be קהרות, pure, that is, they must be of a species that it is permissible to eat. [However, the birds need not be of the two species that are eligible for offerings.] (*Rashi*).

In this context, *pure* cannot mean that they are free from ritual contamination because no living animal can ever be *tamei*.

§ From Arrogance to Humility

The atonement for a sin requires that the erstwhile sinner purge himself of the moral flaw that caused his misdeeds. The underlying cause of slander and gossip — the sins that are punished by *tzaraas* — is haughtiness, because it breeds the contempt for others that lets one talk about them callously. The *metzora's* repentance entails a resolve to change

14 ⁴ *The Kohen shall command that for the person being*
4-6 *purified there be taken two live, clean birds, cedar*
wood, crimson thread, and hyssop. ⁵ *The Kohen shall*
command that the one bird be slaughtered into an
earthenware vessel over spring water. ⁶ *As for*
the live bird: He shall take it with the crimson thread

himself, a change that is graphically symbolized by requiring him to include the following three items with his offering.

וְעֵץ אֶרְזוֹ — *Cedar wood.* Because it grows tall, imposing, and wide, the cedar symbolizes haughtiness (*Rashi*; *Arachin* 16a). The piece used with the offering is at least one cubit long and a quarter of the thickness of "a standard bedpost" (*Sifra*, *Negaim* 14:7).

וְשָׁנִי תוֹלַעַת וְאַזּוֹב — *Crimson thread, and hyssop.* The first is wool dyed with a pigment made from a lowly creature, a type of insect or snail, whose identity is unclear. Thus it symbolizes the penitent's newfound humility. Hyssop, a lowly plant, symbolizes the same idea of humility (*Rashi*).^[1]

[Although the *hyssop* is the translation that has become familiar in English versions, there is strong evidence that it is not accurate. The Arabic word used by *R' Saadia*, *Ibn Ezra*, and *Rambam* (in

comm. to *Negaim* 14:6) is generally translated as *thyme*. *Radak* (*Shorashim*) renders it as *oregano*.]

וְשָׁחַט — *Be slaughtered.* The slaughter is not a sacrificial service; and it is done in the manner of *shechitah*, at the front of the neck with a knife, not through *קליקה*, nipping at the back of the neck, like bird offerings. The slaughter may be performed anywhere, but it must be done by a Kohen. [Thus the simple meaning of the verse is that *the Kohen shall command* that another Kohen slaughter the bird (*Malbim*).] After the ritual is completed, the dead bird is buried (*Rambam*, *Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 11:1,5).

הַצֶּפֶר הָאֶחָד — *The one bird.* The use of the definite article *ה*, *the*, indicates that the better of the two is slaughtered (*Sifra*).

עַל-מִיִּם חַיִּים — *Over spring water.* When the bird is slaughtered, it is held over the earthenware vessel so

1. The very fact that the *metzora* has been cured of his Divinely imposed affliction should be sufficient proof that he has repented from his haughtiness; why then is he required to bring these three items to teach him a lesson he has already learned? — There are two forms of humility. The first and less meaningful kind comes when someone suffers pain or poverty, which break the spirit and cause him to lose his arrogance and recognize his vulnerability. But this is only temporary, because the humility will probably end soon after the suffering is over. True humility requires a person to realize his own insignificance in comparison with the infinite greatness of God. Now that the *metzora* has achieved the first level of humility — not so much through personal effort, but through the pain of physical suffering and isolation — his offering includes the message that he should continue his striving to become genuinely humble (*R' Avraham of Sochatchov*).

וְאֶת-הָאֵזֶב וְכָל אוֹתָם וְאֵת הַצֹּפֶר הַחִיָּה
בְּדָם הַצֹּפֶר הַשֶּׁחֻטָּה עַל הַמַּיִם הַחַיִּים:
וְהִזָּה עַל הַמַּטְהָר מִן-הַצֹּרֶעַת שֶׁבַע פַּעַמִּים
וְטָהְרוּ וְשָׁלַח אֶת-הַצֹּפֶר הַחִיָּה עַל-פְּנֵי
הַשָּׂדֶה: וְכִבֶּסְתָּ הַמַּטְהָר אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וְגִלְחָה
אֶת-כָּל-שְׁעָרוֹ וְרִחַץ בַּמַּיִם וְטָהַר וְאַחֲרָיִם
יָבֹא אֶל-הַמִּחְנֶה וַיֵּשֶׁב מִחוּץ לְאֹהֶל
שִׁבְעַת יָמִים: וְהִיָּה בַיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי יְגַלַּח
אֶת-כָּל-שְׁעָרוֹ אֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ וְאֶת-זָקְנוֹ וְאֵת
גְּבֹת עֵינָיו וְאֶת-כָּל-שְׁעָרוֹ יְגַלַּח וְכִבֶּס
אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וְרִחַץ אֶת-בָּשָׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם וְטָהַר:

that its blood will flow directly into the vessel containing the fresh spring water. A *r'vi'is* of water is used (approx. 3.3-5.5 fl. oz.) so that the redness of the blood will be easily noticeable (*Rashi, Sifra*).

6. יָקַח אֹתָהּ — *He shall take it.* The bird is singled out to indicate that it is treated separately from the three other items that are used in this ritual. The cedar wood and hyssop are tied together with the red thread. Then, that bundle is held in the [right] hand together with the bird and they are dipped into the blood-water mixture (*Rashi, Sifra*).

7. עַל הַמַּטְהָר — *Upon the person being purified.* Upon the back of his hand; some say on his forehead (*Sifra*).

עַל פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה — *Upon the open field.* The Kohen stands in the city and throws the bird toward the direction of a field; he may not direct the bird

toward a desert or the sea. If the bird flies back to the city, the Kohen must keep sending it back to the field (*Rambam, Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 11:1*).

8. וְכִבֶּסְתָּ ... וְרִחַץ — *Shall immerse ... and immerse himself.* Normally, these verbs refer, respectively, to laundering clothing and bathing oneself, but whenever they are used in a context of removing *tumah*, as in our verse, they refer to immersion in a *mikveh* (see *Rashi 13:58*).

מִחוּץ לְאֹהֶל — *Outside of his tent.* The meaning is figurative; he is permitted to return to his home, but he is prohibited to cohabit with his wife. [It would be illogical to say that he is permitted to return to the city and go wherever he wishes except to his home (*Gur Aryeh*)] (*Rashi, Rambam, Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 11:1*). According to this interpretation, the *metzora* is permitted to enter his home; only cohabitation is forbidden.

and the hyssop, and he shall dip them and the live bird into the blood of the slaughtered bird that was slaughtered upon the spring water. ⁷ Then he shall sprinkle seven times upon the person being purified from the tzaraas; he shall purify him, and he shall set the live bird free upon the open field. ⁸ The person being purified shall immerse his clothing, shave off all his hair, and immerse himself in the water and become pure. Thereafter he may enter the camp; but he shall dwell outside of his tent for seven days.

⁹ On the seventh day he shall shave off all his hair: his head, his beard, his eyebrows, and all his hair shall he shave off; he shall immerse his clothing and immerse his flesh in water, and become pure.

However, the Mishnah (Negaim 14:2) and Sifra imply that this verse is interpreted literally: he is forbidden to enter his own home as well as to cohabit. Vilna Gaon's commentary to the Mishnah follows the latter view.

9.—The Second Stage of Purification: Shaving

וְגִלַּח — *He shall shave.* The shaving must be done by the Kohen, who is required to shave all the exposed hair anywhere on the *metzora's* body, with the exception of hair inside the nose, which is not visible to external observation (Rambam, Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 11:1). According to Rashi [whose commentary follows the view of R' Yishmael in Sotah 16a], there is also no requirement to shave

the hair under the armpits.^[1]

R' Hirsch suggests a reason for the shaving. Hair covers the body to a degree and is an insulation of sorts. By removing the *metzora's* hair, the message is brought home to him that he must make a clean break with his past and change his way of living and dealing with people. When the Levites were consecrated for their role in the Temple service, they, too, were shaved (Numbers 8:7), similarly symbolizing that they were to discard their past and devote themselves to God.

וְטָהַר — *And become pure.* He is pure only relative to the major degree of contamination that he had previously. However, he retains a lower degree of contamination, as ex-

1. The verse specifies only three areas of hair that must be shaven — the head, beard, and eyebrows — because they symbolize his sin. The head represents haughtiness; since he considered himself better and more worthy of respect than those he maligned. The beard frames the mouth, which spoke the gossip and slander. The eyebrows represent the base trait of *jealousy* [lit. narrowness of the eye], which motivated him to destroy the reputation of others (Kli Yakar).

וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי יִקַּח שְׁנֵי-כִבְשִׁים תְּמִימִם
 וּכְבֶּשֶׂה אֶחָת בַּת-שָׁנָה תְּמִימָה וּשְׁלֹשָׁה
 עֶשְׂרִינִים סֵלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן וְלֹג
 יא אֶחָד שֶׁמֶן: וְהֶעֱמִיד הַכֹּהֵן הַמִּטְהָר אֶת
 הָאִישׁ הַמִּטְהָר וְאֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל
 יב מוֹעֵד: וּלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַכֶּבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד
 וְהִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לְאַשֶׁם וְאֶת-לֵג הַשֶּׁמֶן וְהִנִּיף
 שני יג אֹתָם תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְשָׁחַט אֶת-
 הַכֶּבֶשׂ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחָט אֶת-הַחֲטָאֹת
 וְאֶת-הָעֵלָה בַּמָּקוֹם הַקָּדֵשׁ כִּי כֹחֲטָאֹת
 הָאֲשֶׁם הוּא לִכְהֵן קֹדֶשׁ קֹדָשִׁים הוּא:

plained in the prefatory remarks to verse 4.

10-20. The Final Stage of Purification: Offerings

10. וּשְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרִינִים — *Three tenth-ephahs*. A tenth-ephah is the volume of 43.2 eggs. The *metzora* brings three animal offerings, and each one comes with a meal-offering of one tenth-ephah. In this matter, the *metzora* is an exception to the rule, since sin- and guilt-offerings do not normally come with meal-offerings (*Rashi*, *Menachos* 90b). [It may be that the *metzora* is accorded this honor as God's Own testimony to the sincerity of his repentance, as evidenced by the removal of the signs of his affliction.].

וְלֹג אֶחָד שֶׁמֶן — *And one log of oil*. The oil was used as described in verses 15-18. A *log* is a liquid measure with a volume of six eggs, or 13.2-22 fluid ounces.

11. וְאֹתָם — *Along with them*. I.e., the three animals, the meal-offerings, and the oil (*Sifra*, see *Ravad*).

וְהִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לְאַשֶׁם — *At the entrance of the Tent of Meeting*. Until the *metzora* has completed all his offerings, he is forbidden to come into the Courtyard, because he is still contaminated. Instead, he stands just outside the eastern entrance, so that he is not inside the Courtyard, but is close enough for the Kohen to put oil on him, as required by the verses below [and so that he can reach in to perform *סמיכה*, *leaning* upon his offerings]. In the Temple, the *metzora* would stand in the opening of the Nicanor Gate, an area that was not consecrated as part of the Courtyard (*Rashi*).

12. וְהִקְרִיב אֹתוֹ לְאַשֶׁם — *And bring it near for a guilt-offering*. Although the term *וְהִקְרִיב* usually refers to the performance of the sacrificial service, our verse is an exception,

14 ¹⁰ On the eighth day, he shall take two unblemished
10-13 sheep and one unblemished ewe in its first year, three
 tenth-ephahs of fine flour mixed with oil, and one log of
 oil. ¹¹ The Kohen who purifies shall place the person
 being purified along with them before HASHEM at the
 entrance of the Tent of Meeting. ¹² The Kohen shall take
 the one sheep and bring it near for a guilt-offering, with
 the log of oil; and he shall wave them as a wave-offering
 before HASHEM.

¹³ He shall slaughter the sheep in the place where
 he will slaughter the sin-offering and the elevation-
 offering, in the holy place; for the guilt-offering is
 like the sin-offering, it is the Kohen's, it is most holy.

since it is only in the next verse that
 the Torah begins to speak of the
 actual slaughter (Mizrachi). Rather,
 our verse means that he brings the
 offering into the Courtyard with the
 intention of using it for his *asham*
 (Rashi).⁽¹⁾

וְהִנִּיף אֹתָם — And he shall wave
 them. The Kohen lifts the living
 animal and the oil and waves them
 (Rashi). He waves them toward the
 four directions, to the One Who is
 Master of all directions, and he raises
 them upward and downward, to the
 Master of heaven and earth (Mena-
 chos 62a). See commentary to 7:30.

13. בַּמָּקוֹם — In the place. Like the
 sin- and elevation-offerings (1:11),
 this *asham* is slaughtered in the

northern part of the Courtyard
 (Rashi).

בְּחֻטְאֵת הָאָשָׁם — For the guilt-offering
 is like the sin-offering. Even
 though the service of this *asham* is
 different from all other sin-offerings
 in that its blood is placed upon the
 body of the penitent (v. 14), never-
 theless the rest of its service is like
 [that of] the sin-offering, in that its
 blood and sacrificial parts are placed
 on the Altar (Rashi, Zevachim 49a).

לַכֹּהֵן — It is the Kohen's. Further
 proof that the offering is most holy is
 that its flesh is eaten entirely by the
 Kohanim, unlike the flesh of peace-
 offerings, which is divided among
 the Kohanim and the owners
 (Meshech Chochmah).

1. Sforino notes that a guilt-offering — not a sin-offering — is the offering brought by
 someone who uses the property of the Temple for his personal benefit (5:14). By requiring the
metzora to bring the same offering, the Torah implies that he, too, has taken something away
 from God. A *tzaraas*-affliction is a punishment for gossip and haughtiness. A gossip typically
 speaks behind people's backs, so that his victims and their friends will not know what was
 said, as if his stealth will prevent God from knowing what he is doing. Haughtiness, too, is a
 denial of the grandeur that is God's alone. Therefore the fitting offering is an *asham*.

יד וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּם הָאֵשֶׁם וַיִּתֵּן הַכֹּהֵן עַל-
תְּנוּךְ אָזְנוֹ הַמִּטְהָר הַיְמָנִית וְעַל-בֶּהֱן יָדוֹ
טו הַיְמָנִית וְעַל-בֶּהֱן רִגְלוֹ הַיְמָנִית: וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן
מִלֵּג הַשֶּׁמֶן וַיִּצֶק עַל-כַּף הַכֹּהֵן הַשְּׂמָאלִית:
טז וַיִּטְבֵּל הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-אֶצְבָּעוֹ הַיְמָנִית מִן-הַשֶּׁמֶן
אֲשֶׁר עַל-כַּפוֹ הַשְּׂמָאלִית וַהֲזָה מִן-הַשֶּׁמֶן
יז בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וּמִיִּתֵּר
הַשֶּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל-כַּפוֹ יִתֵּן הַכֹּהֵן עַל-תְּנוּךְ אָזְנוֹ
הַמִּטְהָר הַיְמָנִית וְעַל-בֶּהֱן יָדוֹ הַיְמָנִית וְעַל-
יח בֶּהֱן רִגְלוֹ הַיְמָנִית עַל דָּם הָאֵשֶׁם: וַהֲנוֹתָר
בַּשֶּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל-כַּף הַכֹּהֵן יִתֵּן עַל-רֹאשׁ
יט הַמִּטְהָר וַיִּכְפֹּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וַעֲשֵׂה
הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַחֲטָאת וַיִּכְפֹּר עַל-הַמִּטְהָר
כ מִטְמְאָתוֹ וְאַחֲרָיִךְ יִשְׁחָט אֶת-הָעֵלָה: וַהֲעֵלָה
הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הָעֵלָה וְאֶת-הַמִּנְחָה הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
וְאֵם וַיִּכְפֹּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן וְטָהַר:

שלישי [חמישי] כא

14. וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן — *The Kohen shall take*. Two Kohanim participate in receiving the blood after the slaughter. One receives blood in a sacred vessel, from which he will throw it on the Altar, in the manner of every blood service of guilt-offerings. The other Kohen receives blood in his right hand, pours it into his left hand and then dips his right index finger into the blood to apply it to the *metzora*, as described in this verse (*Negaim* 14:8, *Rambam*, *Hil. Mechusrei Kapparah* 4:2).

תנוך אָזְנוֹ — *Middle part of the ... ear*. See 8:23. Only after the blood service

on the Altar is the blood placed on his ear (*Sifra*).

R' Hirsch explains that blood is placed on his ear, thumb, and big toe, to symbolize that henceforth the *metzora* must improve himself in mind (ear), deed (thumb, i.e., action), and effort (big toe, i.e., forward movement).

16. לִפְנֵי ה' — *Before HASHEM*. The Kohen throws oil westward, in the direction of the Holy of Holies (*Rashi*, *Sifra*). For each toss of the oil, he dips his finger into the oil in his left palm (*Negaim* 14:9).

17. עַל דָּם הָאֵשֶׁם — *On the blood of*

- 14** ¹⁴ The Kohen shall take from the blood of the guilt-offering, and the Kohen shall place it on the middle part of the right ear of the person being purified and on the thumb of his right hand and the big toe of his right foot.
- 14-20** ¹⁵ The Kohen shall take from the log of oil and he shall pour it upon the Kohen's left palm. ¹⁶ The Kohen shall dip his right index finger into the oil that is in his left palm; and he shall sprinkle from the oil with his finger seven times before HASHEM. ¹⁷ Some of the oil remaining on his palm, the Kohen shall put on the middle part of the right ear of the man being purified, on his right thumb and on the big toe of his right foot; on the blood of the guilt-offering. ¹⁸ And the rest of the oil that is on the Kohen's palm, he shall place upon the head of the person being purified; and the Kohen shall atone for him before HASHEM. ¹⁹ The Kohen shall perform the sin-offering service and atone for the person being purified from his contamination; and then he shall slaughter the elevation-offering. ²⁰ The Kohen shall bring the elevation-offering and the meal-offering up to the Altar; and the Kohen shall atone for him, and he becomes pure.

the guilt-offering. The verse teaches first that the blood must be placed on the *metzora*, and then the oil is applied. Even if the blood had already dried, it is sufficient to place the oil on the same place where the blood had been, since verse 28 says explicitly that the oil is put on the place of the blood, implying that it is not necessary for the blood still to be there (*Sifra*).

18. וְהוֹתֵר ... עַל-כֶּף — And the rest ... on the ... palm. But the oil remaining in the jar is apportioned among the Kohanim, who use it for food and eat it in the Courtyard (Hil. Mechusrei Kapparah 4:3).

20. וְטָהַר — And he becomes pure. This is the final step of the lengthy purification process; now he may enter the Sanctuary and eat sacrificial flesh.^[1]

1. Ramban notes that the word וְכִפֵּר, and he shall atone, is mentioned three times in the context of the offerings. The guilt-offering (v. 18) atones for the sins that caused him to become a *metzora*. The sin-offering (v. 19) atones for the blasphemies he may well have uttered in bemoaning the suffering during his state of contamination. Finally, there is atonement in the sense that the elevation- and meal-offering (v. 20) elevate him so that he can take his place once more as part of the nation.

כָּל הוּא וְאִין יָדוֹ מִשְׁגָּת וְלָקַח כֶּבֶשׂ אֶחָד
אֲשֶׁם לַתְּנוּפָה לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו וְעִשְׂרוֹן סֹלֶת
כב אֶחָד בָּלוּל בְּשֶׁמֶן לְמִנְחָה וְלֵג שָׁמֶן: וּשְׁתֵּי
תָרִים אוֹ שְׁנֵי בָנֵי יוֹנָה אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיֵג יָדוֹ וְהָיָה
כג אֶחָד חֲטָאת וְהָאֶחָד עֹלָה: וְהָבִיא אֹתָם
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי לְטַהֲרָתוֹ אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-פֶּתַח
כד אֹהֶל-מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-
כֶּבֶשׂ הָאֲשֶׁם וְאֶת-לֵג הַשָּׁמֶן וְהִנִּיף אֹתָם
כה הַכֹּהֵן תְּנוּפָה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְשַׁחֲטָה אֶת-כֶּבֶשׂ
הָאֲשֶׁם וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִדָּם הָאֲשֶׁם וְנָתַן
עַל-תְּנוּךְ אֹזֶן-הַמִּטְהָר הַיָּמִינִית וְעַל-בֶּהֱן יָדוֹ

21-32. The Offering of the Poor Metzora

21. וְאִם-דָּל הוּא — *If he is poor.* After saying that he is poor, the verse says that he cannot afford the regular offering, an apparent redundancy. The word דָּל, *poor person*, can mean simply that his fortune has become somewhat depleted, a phenomenon that is to be expected of someone who has been isolated from the community for some time. Consequently the verse must add that the depletion of his resources must be so significant that he cannot afford the required offering (*Sifra*).

כָּפַר — *For a waving to atone.* By juxtaposing waving and atonement, the Torah suggests that the atonement is not complete unless the waving has been performed (*Sifra*). This may explain why even the poorest people are required to bring at least one animal for the

guilt-offering. Since bird-offerings are never waved, the *metzora* would not achieve his full atonement unless the *asham* was an animal (*Ha'amek Davar*).

וְעִשְׂרוֹן ... אֶחָד — *And one tenth-ephah.* The *metzora* who is wealthy enough to bring three animal offerings brings three tenth-ephahs of flour (v. 10), but the poor person brings only one. Only animals are accompanied by meal-offerings; since the poor *metzora* brings only one animal, he requires only one meal-offering (*Rashi*).

22. אֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיֵג יָדוֹ — *For whichever his means are sufficient.* Turtle-doves, being older and bigger, would be more expensive than young pigeons (*Panim Yafos*).

Meshech Chochmah comments that the verse stresses *for whichever his means are sufficient*, to teach that even though turtledoves are

14 ²¹ If he is poor and his means are not sufficient, then
21-25 he shall take one sheep as a guilt-offering for a waving
to atone for him; and one tenth-ephah of fine flour
mixed with oil for a meal-offering, and a log of oil.
²² And two turtledoves or two young pigeons — for
whichever his means are sufficient — one shall be a
sin-offering and one an elevation-offering. ²³ He shall
bring them to the Kohen, on the eighth day of his
purification, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting,
before HASHEM.

²⁴ The Kohen shall take the guilt-offering sheep and
the log of oil; and the Kohen shall wave them as a
waving before HASHEM. ²⁵ He shall slaughter the guilt-
offering sheep and the Kohen shall take some of the
guilt-offering's blood and place it on the middle part of
the right ear of the man being purified and on the thumb

always mentioned first, they are not preferable to young pigeons. The person brings whatever he can afford.

This phrase appears three times: here and in verses 30 and 31. Sifra explains that they refer to three different situations. The basic question is what does one do if his economic situation changes after the time he became liable to bring the offerings; must he switch from offerings of poverty to those of wealth, and vice versa, or must he carry on his original obligation? Obviously, if he had already consecrated all of his offerings, he must go through with them. But what if he had consecrated only his *asham*, which must be a lamb, no matter what his economic status, and then he became wealthy or poor? The three verses refer to three different possibilities, and teach

that the key factor is the degree of his wealth at the moment of consecration. The cases are as follows:

(a) Verse 22 speaks of a person who was wealthy at the time he became obligated to bring the offering, but lost his money before he slaughtered it. Since he was poor when he was ready to slaughter his offerings, he brings a poor person's offering.

(b) Verse 30 refers to a wealthy person who slaughtered a lamb for his guilt-offering, but lost his money before he consecrated the other two necessary animals. Even though he had slaughtered his guilt-offering before becoming indigent, he completes it with two birds.

(c) Verse 31 involves the opposite sort of case: he was poor when he slaughtered his guilt-offering, but by the time he was ready to bring

כו היִמָּנִית וְעַל-בֶּהֱן רָגְלוֹ הִימָנִית: וּמִן-הַשָּׁמֶן
כו יֵצֵק הַכֹּהֵן עַל-בֶּהֱן הַכֹּהֵן הַשְּׂמָאלִית: וְהָיָה
הַכֹּהֵן בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ הִימָנִית מִן-הַשָּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁר
עַל-כַּפּוֹ הַשְּׂמָאלִית שֶׁבַע פָּעָמִים לִפְנֵי
כח יְהוָה: וְנָתַן הַכֹּהֵן מִן-הַשָּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל-כַּפּוֹ
עַל-תְּנוּף אֶזְנוֹ הַמִּטְהָר הִימָנִית וְעַל-בֶּהֱן יָדוֹ
הִימָנִית וְעַל-בֶּהֱן רָגְלוֹ הִימָנִית עַל-מָקוֹם
כט דָּם הָאֵשֶׁם: וְהִנּוֹתָר מִן-הַשָּׁמֶן אֲשֶׁר עַל-בֶּהֱן
הַכֹּהֵן יִתֵּן עַל-רֹאשׁ הַמִּטְהָר לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו
ל פְּנֵי יְהוָה: וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת-הָאֶחָד מִן-הַתְּלָיִים אוֹ
לא מִן-בְּנֵי הַיּוֹנָה מֵאֲשֶׁר תִּשְׁיֵג יָדוֹ: אֶת אֲשֶׁר-
תִּשְׁיֵג יָדוֹ אֶת-הָאֶחָד חֲטָאת וְאֶת-הָאֶחָד
עֹלָה עַל-הַמִּנְחָה וּכְפָר הַכֹּהֵן עַל הַמִּטְהָר
לב לִפְנֵי יְהוָה: וְאֵת תּוֹרֹת אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נִגַּע צָרַעַת
אֲשֶׁר לֹא-תִשְׁיֵג יָדוֹ בְּטֹהַרְתּוֹ:

רכיעי [ששי] לג-לד וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: כִּי

birds, he had become well to do. Even though he began his offering in poverty, he must complete it with the animals he can now afford. (See *Rambam, Hil. Mechusrei Kapparah* 5:9, and *Malbim*.)

33-57. נִגְעֵי בָתִּים / Tzaraas on Houses

Tzaraas-type afflictions in houses are clearly supernatural occurrences, and come for some purpose or lesson. There are two versions given by the Sages and cited by the commentators. The more familiar one, from *Sifra* and *Vayikra Rabbah*, and cited by *Rashi* and others is that when the

Canaanite inhabitants of the Land saw that the Israelites would conquer the Land, they hid their valuables in the walls of their homes. In order to enable the Jewish owners of those houses to acquire this wealth, God placed an affliction on the part of the wall where the treasure was buried. The offending stones had to be cut away, revealing the treasure.

However, *Rambam (Hil. Tumas Tzaraas* 16:10) comments that, like all other such afflictions, these are Divine punishments for selfish behavior and gossip. He adds that God mercifully begins by afflicting property — first houses and then gar-

14 of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot.
26-34 ²⁶ From the oil the Kohen shall pour upon the Kohen's left palm. ²⁷ The Kohen shall sprinkle with his right index finger some of the oil that is in his left palm seven times before HASHEM. ²⁸ The Kohen shall place some of the oil that is on his palm upon the middle of the right ear of the person being purified, on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot — on the place of the guilt-offering's blood. ²⁹ And the rest of the oil that is on the Kohen's palm, he shall place upon the head of the person being purified; to atone for him before HASHEM.
³⁰ He shall then perform the service of one of the turtledoves or of the young pigeons, for whichever his means are sufficient. ³¹ Of whichever his means are sufficient — one is a sin-offering and one is an elevation-offering — along with the meal-offering; and the Kohen shall atone for the one being purified, before HASHEM. ³² This is the law of one in whom there is a tzaraas affliction — whose means are not sufficient — for his purification.

³³ HASHEM spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ³⁴ When

ments — then, if the victim does not draw the proper lesson and repent, he will be stricken by an affliction on his person. The source of this view is the Talmud expounding on verse 35, which describes the owner of the house as *the one to whom the house belongs*. His sin was the selfish feeling that the house is *his* and that he is under no obligation to share his blessings with anyone else. When someone asked to borrow something, he replied that he doesn't have such an item. God brings tzaraas to his house, forcing him to remove his belongings from it, so that everyone can see what he owns, and how

thoughtless he is (Yoma 11b).

Such a person displays a breath of heresy. He thinks that his property is his alone, acquired solely through his own efforts, and no one else is entitled to enjoy the benefits of his personal success. But the house and the money and the success are God-given! The same God Who gave him what he has wants him to share with others, and God can easily give him more or take away what he is misusing (Tzror HaMor).

Verse 34 indicates that only in Eretz Yisrael could there be tzaraas afflictions in houses. Ramban (13:47) explains that by their very nature,

תבאו אל-ארץ כנען אשר אני נתן לכם
לאחזה ונתתי נגע צרעת בבית ארץ
זה אחוזתכם: ובא אשר-לו הבית והגיד לכהן
לאמר כנגע נראה לי בבית: וצוה הכהן
ופנו את-הבית בטָרֶם יבא הכהן לראות
את-הנגע ולא יטמא כל-אשר בבית ואחר
זו בן יבא הכהן לראות את-הבית: וראה
את-הנגע והנה הנגע בקירת הבית
שקערורת ירקרקת או אדמדמת ומראיהו

such afflictions are miraculous, because they never occur naturally. When Jews lived in their land and conducted themselves as God wished them to, there was an aura of holiness upon them, which was reflected even in physical radiance. And if individuals among them sinned, their fall would be reflected in the loss of their physical beauty and the appearance of *tzaraas*-afflictions on their houses and clothing. Only in the Holy Land could spiritual flaws have such tangible effects.

Although the imposition of the afflictions goes from the less severe to the more severe, the Torah lists them in the opposite order, beginning with *tzaraas* on the person and concluding with afflictions on houses. This is because the Torah prefers to give the punishments in descending order, rather than list steadily worsening punishments (R' Bachya).

34. לאחזה ... ארץ כנען — *The land of Canaan ... as a possession.* These laws applied only after the Land had been conquered and apportioned

among the people as their permanent possession (*Sifra*).

Midrash Tadshei comments that the above law explains why the chapter of afflictions on houses is not in the previous chapter, with the other instances of *tzaraas*. The laws of afflictions on people and garments were applicable in the Wilderness, as soon as Moses taught them, but the laws of houses would not begin to apply until many years later. Since they were divided in their times of applicability, they are separated in the Torah.

ונתתי — *And I will place.* The implication is that God is conveying good news to the people. This is the source of the opinion that the reason for the affliction on houses is to disclose buried treasure, as noted above (*Rashi*).

ארץ אחוזתכם — *The land of your possession.* This implies that the laws of *tzaraas* in houses apply only in *Eretz Yisrael*, because it was the land given us as our possession. Similarly, they do not apply in Jerusalem, because it is the national city, and not

14 you arrive in the land of Canaan that I give you as a
35-37 possession, and I will place a *tzaraas* affliction upon a house in the land of your possession;³⁵ the one to whom the house belongs shall come and declare to the Kohen, saying: Something like an affliction has appeared to me in the house.³⁶ The Kohen shall command, and they shall clear the house before the Kohen comes to look at the affliction, so that everything in the house should not become contaminated; and afterward shall the Kohen come to look at the house.³⁷ He shall look at the affliction and behold! — the affliction is in the walls of the house, depressed, deep greens or deep reds; and their appear-

the possession of individuals (Rambam, Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 14:11; Yoma 12a). [Since most commentators agree that such afflictions were miraculous, this verse indicates that no *tzaraas* of houses would appear in such places.]

35. וְהִגִּיד לַכֹּהֵן — And declare to the Kohen. The Kohen should elicit the underlying reason for the affliction, explaining to the victim that it is a punishment for gossip, thereby influencing him to repent (*Sifra*).

כְּנֶגַע — Something like an affliction. Even if the householder is a scholar and he knows that it is truly a *tzaraas*, he should not take it upon himself to say so definitively; that decision is the Kohen's prerogative (*Rashi*, *Sifra*). One should avoid

using expressions of impurity; therefore, it would not be proper to describe his house as containing an affliction (*Mizrachi*). Alternatively, one should develop the habit of modesty, saying, "I am not sure" (*Divrei David*).

36. וּפָקַד אֶת־הַבַּיִת — And they shall clear the house. In allowing the owner to evacuate the house, the Torah wants to avoid loss or inconvenience to the inhabitants. In case the house were to be declared *tamei* or quarantined, everything in it would become *tamei* as well, but since this could not happen until the Kohen declared it to be so, there is time to remove the contents (*Rashi*, *Sifra*).⁽¹⁾

37. שָׁקֵצְרוֹרֶת — Depressed. The color of the affliction makes it seem

1. This law demonstrates how much the Torah is concerned with safeguarding Jewish property. Even if the house were to be declared *tamei*, the loss would be negligible. All vessels except for earthenware can be immersed to remove their contamination, and earthenware is very inexpensive. Food may be eaten even though it is *tamei*. Nevertheless, the Torah wishes to spare people even from this trivial loss. About which people is the Torah concerned? About the wicked, because *tzaraas* does not afflict the righteous. If God is so sympathetic toward the wicked, surely He has compassion for the righteous. And if God is so concerned about their property, surely He is concerned for the lives of their sons and daughters (*Sifra*, *Rashi*).

שָׁפַל מִן־הַקִּיר: וַיֵּצֵא הַכֹּהֵן מִן־הַבַּיִת אֶל־
 פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת וְהִסְגִּיר אֶת־הַבַּיִת שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:
 וְשֵׁב הַכֹּהֵן בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׂבִיעִי וְרָאָה וְהָיָה פֶּשֶׁה
 מ הַנֶּגַע בְּקִירַת הַבַּיִת: וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וַחֲלָצוּ
 אֶת־הָאֲבָנִים אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶן הַנֶּגַע וְהִשְׁלִיכוּ
 אֶתְהֶן אֶל־מַחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל־מָקוֹם טָמֵא:
 וְאֶת־הַבַּיִת יִקְצַע מִבַּיִת סָבִיב וְשִׁפְכוּ אֶת־
 הָעֶפֶר אֲשֶׁר הִקְצֹו אֶל־מַחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל־
 מָקוֹם טָמֵא: וְלָקְחוּ אֲבָנִים אַחֲרוֹת וְהִבִּיאוּ
 מֵב אֶל־תַּחַת הָאֲבָנִים וְעָפָר אַחֵר יִקַּח וְטָח
 מִג אֶת־הַבַּיִת: וְאִם־יָשׁוּב הַנֶּגַע וּפָרַח בַּבַּיִת
 אַחֵר חָלַץ אֶת־הָאֲבָנִים וְאֶחָדִי הַקְצוֹת
 מֵד אֶת־הַבַּיִת וְאֶחָדִי הַטּוֹחַ: וְבֹא הַכֹּהֵן וְרָאָה

to be deeper (*Rashi, Sifra*). The last phrase in the verse merely explains the meaning of this word (*Mizrachi, Ralbag*).

38. וְהִסְגִּיר — *And he shall quarantine.* According to *Rashi (Chullin 10b)* and *Ran (Nedarim 56b)*, the Kohen locks the door so that no one can enter for seven days. *Rambam*, however, holds that the Kohen simply declares that it is quarantined and that no one is permitted to enter (see *Mishneh LaMelech, Tumas Tzaraas 14:5*).

39. פֶּשֶׁה — *Had spread.* The procedure that must be followed in the event the affliction has spread is outlined in this sequence of verses, but nowhere in the passage are we told explicitly what is done if the affliction has not spread by the end

of the seven-day quarantine. *Rashi* (v. 44) cites a lengthy and somewhat complex *Sifra*, which derives the following: If the affliction is still unchanged on the seventh day, the Kohen quarantines it again. The seventh day of the first quarantine is counted as the first day of the next seven-day period. If it is still unchanged at the end of the second quarantine (which is the thirteenth day since the beginning of the procedure), the Kohen orders that the afflicted stones be removed and replaced with new ones, which are plastered over, as prescribed in verses 40-42. Then the Kohen quarantines the house for seven days, the first day of which is the thirteenth day from the start of the entire process. If an affliction reappears anywhere in the house, even if it is smaller than

14 *ance is lower than the wall.* ³⁸ *The Kohen shall exit from*
38-44 *the house to the entrance of the house; and he shall*
 quarantine the house for seven days. ³⁹ *The Kohen shall*
 return on the seventh day; he shall look and behold! —
 the affliction had spread in the walls of the house. ⁴⁰ *The*
 Kohen shall command, and they shall remove the stones
 that contain the affliction, and they shall cast them
 outside the city onto a contaminated place. ⁴¹ *And the*
 house shall be scraped on the inside, all around; the
 mortar that they have scraped they are to pour outside
 the city onto a contaminated place. ⁴² *They shall take*
 other stones and bring them to replace the stones; and
 they shall bring other mortar and plaster the house.

⁴³ *If the affliction returns and erupts in the house*
after he has removed the stones, after he has scraped
the house and after plastering; ⁴⁴ then the Kohen shall

the original one had been, the entire house must be torn down (v. 45).

40. וְהִלְצוּ — *And they shall remove.* Since the verse is in the plural, the Sages derive that two people — the owner of the house and his neighbor — join in taking down the offending part of the wall. This law applies if both their houses share a common wall. “Woe to the wicked one and woe to his neighbor” — not only the wicked owner suffers, but his neighbor as well (*Sifra*).

קִקּוֹם טָמֵא — *A contaminated place.* [Earth itself cannot be *tamei*; the reference here is to the contaminated materials that have been deposited there.] As long as these stones are there, the place is contaminated [presumably like the afflicted house], and things that must remain uncontaminated, such as *terumah*, may not be

brought there (*Rashi, Sifra*).

41. וְקָצַץ מִבֵּיתוֹ סָבִיב — *Shall be scraped on the inside, all around.* In addition to the stones themselves, the Kohen orders the removal of the mortar that was used to bond them to the surrounding stones and which was smeared over them on the inside of the building. All of this debris is to be poured onto the contaminated place outside the camp.

43. וְיָשׁוּב . . . וְיִפְרֹחַ — *Returns and erupts.* It is not necessary for the affliction to reappear in the same place or for it to be larger or even as large as the previous one. However, it must return by the end of the seven-day period. Otherwise, it is treated as a new affliction. The very fact of its return is sufficient to render it contaminated. This reappearance is referred to in the next verse as a spread of the affliction (*Sifra*).

וְהָיָה פֶּשַׁע הַנִּגַּע בְּבֵית צִרְעָת מִמֶּאֱרַת הוּא
 בְּבֵית טָמֵא הוּא: וְנִתַּךְ אֶת-הַבֵּית אֶת-
 אֲבָנָיו וְאֶת-עֲצָיו וְאֶת כָּל-עֹפֶר הַבֵּית
 וְהוֹצִיא אֶל-מְחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל-מָקוֹם טָמֵא:
 וְהָבֵא אֶל-הַבֵּית כָּל-יְמֵי הַסְּגִיר אֹתוֹ
 יִטְמָא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְהִשְׁכַּב בְּבֵית יָכֶבֶס
 אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וְהֵאֱכַל בְּבֵית יָכֶבֶס אֶת-בְּגָדָיו:
 וְאִם-בֹּא יָבֵא הַכֹּהֵן וְרָאָה וְהָיָה לֹא-פֶשַׁע
 הַנִּגַּע בְּבֵית אַחֲרֵי הַטָּח אֶת-הַבֵּית וְטָהַר
 הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַבֵּית כִּי נִרְפָּא הַנִּגַּע: וְלָקַח
 לַחֲטָא אֶת-הַבֵּית שְׁתֵּי צִפְרִים וְעֵץ אֲרָז

44. פֶּשַׁע — *Has spread*. As noted above, it is not necessary for a re-appearing affliction to be larger than the previous one had been. The very fact that it returned after having been removed constitutes a spread.

45. . . . אֶת-אֲבָנָיו — *Its stones* . . . Since the verse speaks of stones, timber, and mortar, the Sages derive that an affliction is not a *tzaraas* unless the part of the wall where it develops is composed of stone, mortar, and wood (*Negaim* 12:2).

46. כָּל-יְמֵי הַסְּגִיר אֹתוֹ יִטְמָא — *All the days he had quarantined it, shall be contaminated*. During any period of quarantine, even if the afflicted stones had been removed from the building, anyone who enters is *tamei*. However, if the stones had been removed and then before the house was quarantined for seven days of observation (as in vs. 40-44), a person enters the building, he is not

tamei. In that case, the quarantine had not begun nor is there anything in the building that can render him *tamei*. Even if a *nega* had reappeared, it would have no status of contamination as yet, since the Kohen would not be permitted to view it until the seventh day. If, however, the Kohen had ruled that the house must be demolished (v. 45), it would remain *tamei* even if someone had removed the afflicted stones (*Rashi, Sifra*).

יִטְמָא עַד-הָעֶרֶב — *Shall be contaminated until evening*. Since there is no mention here of his garments, the Sages infer that his garments are not contaminated unless he meets the conditions derived from the next verse (*Rashi, Sifra*). As in all cases of *tumah* until evening, the person must first immerse himself in a *mikveh*.

וְהִשְׁכַּב . . . וְהֵאֱכַל — *But one who reclines . . . and one who eats*. The

come and look, and behold! — the affliction had spread in the house: it is a malignant tzaraas in the house, it is contaminated. ⁴⁵ He shall demolish the house — its stones, its timber, and all the mortar of the house; they shall take it to the outside of the city, to a contaminated place. ⁴⁶ Anyone who comes into the house during all the days he had quarantined it, shall be contaminated until evening. ⁴⁷ But one who reclines in the house shall immerse his garments; and one who eats in the house shall immerse his garments.

⁴⁸ If the Kohen is to come and look and behold! — the affliction has not spread in the house after he had plastered the house; then the Kohen shall declare the house to be pure, for the affliction has healed. ⁴⁹ To purify the house, he shall take two birds, cedar wood,

phrase shall immerse his garments appears twice in the verse, where once would have been sufficient. From this redundancy the Sages derive a new law that applies only in the case of afflictions in houses. If someone enters the building and remains there long enough for him to recline and eat a standard meal in that reclining position, the garments he is wearing become contaminated along with him. If he does not remain in the building for that minimum time, then only he is *tamei*, but not the garments he is wearing, as in the previous verse. Garments he is carrying but not wearing — such as a coat slung over his shoulder — or anything else that someone carries into the house, would become contaminated immediately, even though he remains in the building for only a split second (Rashi, Sifra).

48. וַיָּבֹא כֹהֵן — If the [Kohen] is to come. The Kohen comes on the seventh day after the removal of the stones, and finds that the affliction has not spread, i.e., it has not reappeared anywhere in the house (Ramban).

וְנִרְפָּא — Has healed. Only if the stones have been removed and the affliction has not reappeared can it be considered to have healed (Rashi, Sifra).

49-53. Purification of the House

The ritual for purification of the house is identical to the first stage of a *metzora's* purification (vs.4-9) and it is carried out only if the afflicted stones had to be removed from the house. If, however, the affliction disappeared or its color became pale, the ritual is not necessary. Unlike the purification of a human being, no further steps are necessary.

וּשְׁנֵי תוֹלַעַת וְאַזָּב: וְשָׁחַט אֶת-הַצֹּפֶר
 הָאֶחָת אֶל-כְּלִי-חֶרֶשׁ עַל-מִים חַיִּים: וְלָקַח
 אֶת-עֵץ-הָאֶרֶז וְאֶת-הָאֵזָב וְאֶת | שְׁנֵי
 הַתּוֹלַעַת וְאֵת הַצֹּפֶר הַחִיָּה וְטָבַל אֹתָם בְּדָם
 הַצֹּפֶר הַשְּׁחוּטָה וּבַמִּים הַחַיִּים וְהִזָּה אֶל-
 הַבַּיִת שִׁבַּע פְּעָמִים: וַחֲטָא אֶת-הַבַּיִת בְּדָם
 הַצֹּפֹר וּבַמִּים הַחַיִּים וּבַצֹּפֶר הַחִיָּה וּבְעֵץ
 הָאֶרֶז וּבְאֵזָב וּבְשְׁנֵי הַתּוֹלַעַת: וְשָׁלַח אֶת-
 הַצֹּפֶר הַחִיָּה אֶל-מַחוּץ לְעִיר אֶל-פְּנֵי
 הַשָּׂדֶה וּכְפַר עַל-הַבַּיִת וְטָהַר: זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה
 לְכָל-נֹגַע הַצָּרַעַת וְלַנֶּתֶק: וּלְצָרַעַת הַבֶּגֶד
 וְלַבַּיִת: וּלְשֹׂאת וּלְסַפַּחַת וּלְבִהָרַת: לַהוֹרֵת
 בַּיּוֹם הַטָּמֵא וּבַיּוֹם הַטָּהוֹר וְאֵת תּוֹרַת
 הַצָּרַעַת:

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל-אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר:
 דַּבְּרוּ אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתֶּם אֲלֵהֶם אֵישׁ

51. אֶל-הַבַּיִת — *Upon the house.* Upon the outer part of the lintel (Rambam, Hil. Tumas Tzaraas 15:8; Sifra). Some say that he sprinkles over the entire house (Sifra).

54. לְכָל-נֹגַע הַצָּרַעַת — *For every*

tzaraas affliction. This phrase refers to those that appear on healed scabs of burns and wounds (13:18-28). These and the *nesek* (tzaraas of the head) are listed first because they are the most common of the human afflictions (Ramban).

XV

The entire chapter deals with the kinds of discharges from the human body that are contaminated to some degree, and which may require offerings as part of the person's purification process. Verses 1-18 discuss male discharges, and verses 19-30 discuss

female discharges.

1-18. Male Discharges

Semen that is discharged from a Jewish male is contaminated in itself; in addition, it causes contamination to the one who emitted it and to

14 crimson thread, and hyssop. ⁵⁰ He shall slaughter
50-57 one bird into an earthenware vessel over fresh water.

⁵¹ He shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the crimson thread and the live bird and he shall dip them into the blood of the slaughtered bird and into the fresh water; and he shall sprinkle upon the house seven times. ⁵² He shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and with the fresh water; and with the live bird, with the cedar wood, with the hyssop, and with the crimson thread. ⁵³ He shall set the live bird free toward the outside of the city upon the open field; thus he shall atone for the house, and it shall become purified.

⁵⁴ This is the law for every tzaraas affliction and the neseq; ⁵⁵ and tzaraas of the garment and the house; ⁵⁶ and of the s'eis, of the sapachas, and of the baheres; ⁵⁷ to rule on which day it is contaminated and on which day it is purified; this is the law of tzaraas.

15 **H**ASHEM spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: ² Speak to
1-2 the Children of Israel and say to them: Any man

others who come in contact with it. There are three degrees of such contamination, depending on the frequency and type of the discharges, as follows:

(a) זָכָר לְקֵרִי / A male who had a seminal emission, whether the fluid is normal semen or the slightly different zav fluid (see comm. to v. 2). This contamination is the mildest of the three degrees, and it applies no matter what circumstances brought about the discharge. A baal keri [the person who has had such an emission] may immerse himself immediately and becomes completely pure the evening following his immersion. The laws of

tumas keri are the last ones in this passage (vs. 16-18).

(b) זָב / Zav. The discharge which makes someone a zav is slightly different than semen, but a man who has had a single such discharge has the same status as a baal keri, as noted above. A man who has had two such discharges is a zav and has the full severity of contamination, as will be set forth in this passage.

In addition to the zav's more intense degree of contamination, he must wait seven days after the end of his discharge before he can remove the tumah through immersion in a mikveh.

אִישׁ כִּי יִהְיֶה זָב מִבֶּשֶׂרוֹ זָכוּ טָמֵא הוּא:
 ג וְזֹאת תִּהְיֶה טִמְאַתּוֹ בְּזָכוּוֹ כִּרְר בֶּשֶׂרוֹ אֶת-
 זָכוּוֹ אוֹ-הַחֲתִים בֶּשֶׂרוֹ מִזָּכוּוֹ טִמְאַתּוֹ הוּא:
 ד כָּל-הַמִּשְׁכָּב אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב עָלָיו הָזֶב יִטְמָא
 ה וְכָל-הַכֵּלִי אֲשֶׁר-יֵשֵׁב עָלָיו יִטְמָא: וְאִישׁ

These two discharges need not be on different days; as long as there is a short interval between the first and the second, they are reckoned as two separate occurrences. If, however, there is a full day intervening between them — the first was on Monday and the next was on Wednesday — the two discharges do not make the man a *zav*. He is, however, a *baal keri*.

(c) A man who has had three *zav*-discharges, either in the same day with short intervals between them or on successive days, has the same degree of contamination as an ordinary *zav*, but he must also bring an offering at the conclusion of the seven-day period.

2. זָכוּ מִבֶּשֶׂרוֹ — *A discharge from his flesh*. The *flesh* referred to here is the male organ (*Rashi, Sifra*).

The fluid that the Torah calls זָכוּ, *zav*, is similar to, but different from semen. It is loose, dribbles out like barley dough, and is a dull white like a spoiled egg, unlike semen, which has a firmer consistency and is whiter (*Rashi, Rambam Hil. Mechusrei Kapparah* 2:1). *Rambam* (ibid.) adds that it results from a malfunction inside the body, wherein it had collected. From the word מִבֶּשֶׂרוֹ, *from his flesh*, the Sages derive that the emission must dribble from his flesh of its own accord, without external

stimuli. Consequently, the laws of *zav* would not apply if the flow was caused by overeating, overdrinking, carrying heavy weights, strenuous exercise, illness, or inciteful sights or thoughts (*Sifra*). If the man's flow was caused by one of those conditions, he would not become a *zav*, but he would be a *baal keri*.

זָכוּ טָמֵא הוּא — *His discharge is contaminated*. The subject of the verse is the fluid that has been discharged; the status of the man emitting the discharge is the subject of the next verse. The fluid is contaminated with the status of אֲב הַטָּמֵא, *primary or source contamination*, and it transmits contamination through מִנְע וּמִשָּׂא, *contact and being carried*. That is, one becomes *tamei* not only through touching it, but even by bearing its weight without contact. The clothing of this person becomes *tamei*, as well (*Keilim* 1:3).

3. כִּי יִהְיֶה זָכוּ מִבֶּשֶׂרוֹ ... אוֹ-הַחֲתִים בֶּשֶׂרוֹ — *Whether his flesh runs ... or it becomes stopped up*. Two types of discharge render a man a *zav*: The fluid may run, i.e., be clear and loose, like spittle; or it may be thick enough to clog the organ when it dries (*Rashi*).

Alternatively, the nature of the fluid is the same in both instances, but the second case of the phrase refers to a small amount of fluid,

who will have a discharge from his flesh, his discharge is contaminated.³ Thus shall be his contamination when he discharges: whether his flesh runs with his discharge or it becomes stopped up because of his discharge, that is his contamination.⁴ Any bedding upon which the person with the discharge will recline shall be contaminated, and any vessel upon which he will sit shall become contaminated.⁵ A person

which does not run, but remains in place and dries (R' Saadiah, see also *Sifra*, Rambam *ibid.* 2:9).

In the number of times the root *zav* is used in these two verses, the Sages find an allusion to the difference between a man who has had two discharges and one who has had three [see prefatory remarks (b) and (c)]. In verse 2, the root is found twice, alluding to someone who has had two discharges. This number of discharges makes one a *zav*, and causes the level of contamination that lasts for seven days, but is removed by immersion, without the requirement of an offering. In verse 3, the root *zav* appears three times, alluding to a triple discharge. The man who has had three such discharges requires an offering after his seven days are over (*Rashi*, *Sifra*). [As noted above, however, whether there were two discharges or three, the degree of contamination is the same.]

4. וְכִלְי־הַבְּלִי ... בְּלִי־הַמִּשְׁכָּב — Any bedding ... and any vessel. [The *zav*'s bedding and furniture, upon which he sits or which bear his weight, acquire the same degree of contamination as the *zav* himself, that is, they become an אב הטמאה, primary source of *tumah*, as described below in verses 5-6. This contamination, known as *mishkav*

u'moshav, has special laws that do not apply to objects only touched by the *zav*. These *mishkav u'moshav* objects transmit contamination to a person or object, either through physical contact or through being carried. The person or object rendered *tamei* by them — through touching or being carried — becomes a ראשון לטמאה, contamination of the first degree.

[As interpreted by the Sages (*Sifra*), our verse specifies that the status of "bedding and furniture" applies only to items that were designated or, at least, commonly used for reclining or sitting. However, if the *zav* reclines upon vessels that are not used for that purpose — for example, he sits or reclines on a kitchen table — they do not acquire the higher contamination of verses 5-6. Moreover, if he sits or reclines upon the vessel without touching it directly, it does not become contaminated at all. If the *zav* directly touches objects other than bedding and furniture, they become only ראשון לטמאה, a first degree of contamination, even if they touch the *zav* directly. See Rambam *Hil. Mishkav U'Moshav* ch. 7.]

וְשָׁכַב ... יִשְׁכַּב — Will recline ... will sit. From the use of the future tense the Sages derive that the uniquely stringent status of bedding and fur-

אֲשֶׁר יֵגַע בְּמִשְׁכָּבוֹ יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמֵּי־
 וּטְמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְהִישָׁב עַל-הַכְּלִי אֲשֶׁר-
 יֵשֵׁב עָלָיו הָזָב יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמֵּי־
 וּטְמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְהִנְגַּע בְּבֶשֶׂר הָזָב יִכָּבֵס
 בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמֵּי־וּטְמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְכִי-
 יֵרֶק הָזָב בְּטָהוֹר וְכָבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמֵּי־
 וּטְמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְכָל-הַמְרֻכָּב אֲשֶׁר יֵרֶכֶב
 עָלָיו הָזָב יִטְמָא: וְכָל-הַנִּגָּע בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה
 תַּחְתָּיו יִטְמָא עַד-הָעֶרֶב וְהַנּוֹשָׂא אוֹתָם
 יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְרַחֵץ בַּמֵּי־וּטְמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב:

niture [*mishkav u'moshav*] applies only to items that were designated for that purpose (see next two verses). Even if a *zav* were to recline on such items as tables or bookcases, they would not become a *primary tumah*, but a first-degree one, provided he actually came into contact with them. A table does not become a *bed* simply because a *zav* sleeps on it, because he would be asked to vacate and allow the table to be used for its primary purpose (*Rashi, Sifra*).

5. יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו — Shall immerse his garments. Furniture upon which a *zav* has reclined becomes contaminated to such a degree that it has the power to contaminate even the clothing of a person who touches that contaminated furniture. But if the *zav* had merely touched such furniture, but not reclined on it, it becomes a *first degree of contamination*. It can, in turn, contaminate only food and drink, but not people or clothing (*Rashi, Sifra*).

וְנָחֵץ — And immerse himself. He

must immerse himself and his garments in a *mikveh* (see *Rashi* 13:58).

6. וְהִישָׁב — And one who sits. Even if someone sits on a pile of ten blankets, of which only the bottom one has the contamination of *mishkav u'moshav* — *zav*-contamination — so that he did not actually come in direct contact with the contaminated blanket — he is *tamei* as if he had touched it (*Rashi, Sifra*).

Rambam states that bedding and furniture used for sitting or reclining can convey *tumah* in seven ways: through standing, sitting, lying upon, being suspended from, leaning upon, touching and carrying (*Hil. Mishkav U'Moshav* 7:2).

8. וְכִי-יֵרֶק הָזָב — If the person with the discharge will spit. [The *zav's* spittle, like his discharge and his body, has the status of a *primary tumah*.] The spittle contaminates if someone touches it directly or if he carries it (*Rashi, Sifra*).

9. וְכָל-הַמְרֻכָּב — Any riding equipment. [This term refers only to riding

15
6-10

who will touch his bedding shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening. ⁶ And one who sits upon a vessel upon which the man with the discharge will sit, shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening. ⁷ One who touches the flesh of the man with the discharge, shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening. ⁸ If the person with the discharge will spit upon a pure person, he shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening. ⁹ Any riding equipment upon which the person with the discharge will ride shall become contaminated. ¹⁰ And whoever touches anything that will be beneath him, shall become contaminated until evening; and whoever carries them shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening.

equipment which is meant to support the rider so that he will not slip from the saddle or fall. However, the saddle or blankets upon which the *zav* sits is a *moshav*.] The riding equipment of our verse refers to anything that a rider uses to support himself, such as the saddle bow, stirrups, or any part of the harness that the rider uses to steady himself (Rashi).

10. אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה תַּחְתָּיו — *That will be beneath him.* Having been told that the *zav* contaminates riding equipment, we are now told to what extent this contamination spreads. Our verse differentiates between the contamination of *מִשְׁכָּב וּמוֹשָׁב*, *bedding and furniture*, and that of *קֶרֶב*, *riding*

equipment. In the case of bedding and furniture, *tumah* is conveyed not only to the person touching or carrying it, but to his clothing, as well (vs. 5-6). In the case of riding equipment, however, our verse differentiates between touching and carrying. If someone touches it, he becomes *tamei*, but his clothing does not. If he carries it, however, both he and his clothing become *tamei* (Rashi, *Sifra*).

וְהַנּוֹשֵׂא אוֹתָם — *And whoever carries them.* The plural form indicates that the verse refers not only to riding equipment, which was described in the singular in the previous verse, but to all the items mentioned up to now, namely [the *zav* himself], his bedding, furniture, spittle, and semen.

יא וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִגַּע-בּוֹ הָזָב וַיִּדְּיוּ לֹא-שֹׁטֵף בְּמַיִם
 וּכְבֹּס בְּגָדָיו וּרְחֹץ בְּמַיִם וְטָמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב:
 יב וְכָל־חֶרֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִגַּע-בּוֹ הָזָב יִשְׁכַּר וְכָל־
 יג כָּל־עֵץ יִשְׁטֹף בְּמַיִם: וְכִי-יִטְהַר הָזָב מִזּוּבּוֹ
 וְסָפַר לוֹ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים לְטַהֲרָתוֹ וּכְבֹּס בְּגָדָיו
 יד וּרְחֹץ בְּשָׂרוֹ בְּמַיִם חַיִּים וְטָהַר: וּבַיּוֹם
 הַשְּׁמִינִי יִקַּח-לוֹ שְׁתֵּי תֹרִים אוֹ שְׁנֵי בָנֵי יוֹנָה
 וּבָא | לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיִּנָּתֶנּם
 טו אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן: וַעֲשֶׂה אֹתָם הַכֹּהֵן אֶחָד חֲטָאת
 וְהָאֶחָד עֹלָה וְכִפָּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 וְאִישׁ כִּי-תֵצֵא מִמֶּנּוּ שִׁכְבַּת-

ששי [שביעי] טז מִזּוּבּוֹ:

All of them contaminate not only the person carrying them, but his garments as well (*Rashi, Sifra*).

11. וַיִּדְּיוּ לֹא-שֹׁטֵף בְּמַיִם — *Without having rinsed his hands in the water.* Obviously a mere washing of the hands would not remove *tumah*. Even if the discharge had stopped and there were seven "clean" days, contamination cannot be removed without total immersion in a *mikveh*. Rather, the verse speaks of the hands to teach that the *mikveh* water must come in contact only with visible, external parts of the body, similar to the hands, i.e., water need not touch the inside of the mouth, ears, nose, and the like (*Rashi, Sifra*).

According to *Ramban*, the term "rinsing" is an idiomatic term for complete immersion in a *mikveh*, just as "washing clothes" means to immerse them in a *mikveh*. Rinsing with regard to the immersion of people implies that the body must be thoroughly clean, so that no dirt or

other external matter interposes between the water of the *mikveh* and the person immersing himself. The reason the verse specifies *hands* is because it is the hands with which the *zav* would ordinarily touch people or objects. Thus the sense of the verse is that if the *zav* touched someone "with his hands" without having cleaned and immersed them — as part of his body — that person and his clothing become *tamei*.

12. חֶרֶשׁ ... יִשְׁכַּר — *Pottery ... shall be broken.* Unlike metal and wooden vessels that can be purged of *tumah* through immersion in a *mikveh*, earthenware vessels can never be purified as long as they are whole. If they are broken, however, the *tumah* leaves them. See 11:33.

13. יִטְהַר ... מִזּוּבּוֹ — *Ceases [lit. becomes cleansed of] his discharge.* [The word *יִטְהַר* cannot be translated literally as *become pure*, because he does not lose his contamination until he completes the ritual described in

15 ¹¹ Whomever the man with the discharge touches without having rinsed his hands in the water, shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and he remains contaminated until the evening. ¹² Pottery that the man with the discharge will touch shall be broken; and any wooden utensil shall be rinsed in water.

¹³ When the man with the discharge ceases his discharge, he shall count for himself seven days from his cessation, immerse his garments and immerse his flesh in spring water, and become purified. ¹⁴ On the eighth day he shall take for himself two turtledoves or two young pigeons; he shall come before HASHEM to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and give them to the Kohen. ¹⁵ The Kohen shall make them one as a sin-offering and one as a guilt-offering — thus the Kohen shall provide him atonement before HASHEM from his discharge.

¹⁶ A man from whom there is a discharge of semen

the next several verses. Therefore, Rashi explains that the source of the contamination, the discharge, has ended, thus enabling him to purify himself.] The first step is to count off seven days during which there is no discharge (Rashi, *Sifra*).

בְּמַיִם חַיִּים — *In spring water.* A *zav* is the only person who requires immersion in spring water rather than in an ordinary *mikveh* of rain water (see *Mishnah Mikvaos* 1:8).

וְנָכַר עָלָיו — *Shall provide him*

atonement. The *zav's* discharge was caused by an illness striking the reproductive organs. When the victim is healed, he offers a sin-offering to atone for the sin that caused the malady to be brought upon him. Then he brings the elevation-offering to thank God for having cured him (Ramban).^[1]

16-18. Baal Keri

בִּי־חֵצָא מִמֶּנּוּ שִׁכְבַּת־זָרַע — *From whom there is a discharge of semen.*

A man who has an emission of

1. The purification process of a *metzora* involved three animals; even a poor *metzora* had to bring at least one, but a *zav* and a *zavah* bring only birds. The sacrificial service of animals requires several Kohanim, so it is inevitable that the *metzora's* purification process will become well known. This causes him no humiliation, however, because his sin and punishment were public in any case. To the contrary, the fact that so many people will know that he repented and became purified is to his honor. But a *zav's* sin is a very private matter, and God wishes to spare him from shame. Therefore, he brings only birds, whose service can be performed by a single Kohen (*Meshech Chochmah*).

וְרַע וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם אֶת־כָּל־בִּשְׁרוֹ וְטָמֵא עַד־
י הָעָרֶב: וְכָל־בְּגָד וְכָל־עוֹר אֲשֶׁר־יְהִיָּה עָלָיו
שֹׁכֶבֶת־זֶרַע וְכַבֵּס בַּמַּיִם וְטָמֵא עַד־הָעָרֶב:
יח וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אִישׁ אִתָּהּ שֹׁכֶבֶת־זֶרַע
וְרַחֲצוּ בַּמַּיִם וְטָמְאוּ עַד־הָעָרֶב:
יט וְאִשָּׁה כִּי־תִהְיֶה זָכָה גַם יְהִיָּה זָכָה בְּבִשְׂרָהּ
שֹׁכֶצֶת יָמִים תִּהְיֶה בְּנִדָּתָהּ וְכָל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בָּהּ

semen is called a *baal keri*; unlike a *zav*, a *baal keri* is not the victim of a physical malfunction. The very fact that such an emission has taken place is the contaminating factor, even if it happened in the performance of a *mitzvah*. As the next verse states, the semen transmits contamination through contact. Both the person who had the discharge and anyone who may touch the fluid become a *ראשון לטמא*, *first degree of tumah*, and they, in turn, can contaminate food and drink, but not vessels and people (*Zavim* 5:11).

17. וְכַבֵּס בַּמַּיִם — *Shall be immersed in the water*. Semen itself is an *אב הטמא*, *primary source of tumah*, and, as such, it contaminates garments, vessels, and people (see *Zavim* 5:10).

19-28. Niddah and Zavah/Female Discharge

This passage is the basis of the sanctity of the Jewish home, for it contains the laws of *niddah*, the monthly period when husband and wife may not cohabit. It is significant that this *mitzvah* is known as *טהרת המשפחה*, *purity of the family*. Just as the ritual that

binds man and woman to one another is called *קידושין*, *sanctification*, for Jewish marriage is an exercise in bringing sanctity to the human relationship that can most easily become an act of degradation, so the maintenance of this sanctity throughout the years during which the home is built and the future brought into the world depends on the constant purity of the family and the partners who create it. It is instructive that Jewish women throughout the centuries took the lead, often at great personal sacrifice and hardship, in maintaining this purity, and thereby building their families on a summit of holiness. It was because of such devotion that *Ramban* could write that the climax of the Exodus did not come until the Tabernacle was erected, because it was symbolic of the holiness of the Patriarchal Jewish home (see *Ramban's* Introduction to *Exodus*).

Unlike the contamination of a male discharge, which has virtually no application in the absence of the Temple and sanctities that must be kept ritually pure, the female discharge discussed in this passage still has the applicability of the *niddah* laws. The passage contains

15 shall immerse his entire flesh in the water and remain
17-19 contaminated until evening.¹⁷ Any garment or anything of leather upon which there shall be semen, shall be immersed in the water and remain contaminated until evening.¹⁸ A woman with whom a man will have carnal relations, they shall immerse themselves in the water and remain contaminated until evening.

¹⁹ When a woman has a discharge — her discharge from her flesh being blood — she shall be in her state of separation for seven days, and anyone who touches her

two categories of laws. The first (vs. 19-24) applies to *niddah*, a woman in her menstrual period. The rest of the passage speaks of *zavah*, who, like her male counterpart, may be required to bring an offering as part of her purification process.

The Talmud (*Niddah* 66a) states that, since it is often difficult for all but experts to determine when a woman is a *niddah* and when she is a *zavah* — whose laws are far more stringent — the Sages found it necessary to impose some regulations of *zavah* upon all women who experienced a flow. Subsequently, Jewish women, whom the Sages praised for their deep piety and fear of sin, voluntarily adopted additional stringencies upon themselves. The result is that the law of *niddah*, as it is codified in the Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch*, is a combination of the laws of *zavah* and *niddah*. This makes it imperative that one not base halachic decisions on the Scriptural text. This passage deals only with the laws of contamination; the prohibition of cohabitation with a *niddah* is given in chapters 18 and 20, as are the other laws of forbidden relationships.

19-24. Niddah

The first part of the passage deals with a woman's regular menstrual flow, but not with the separate condition of *zavah*. As indicated in verse 25, a crucial difference between *niddah* and *zavah* is the time of the discharge. If it comes during the time of her regular monthly period, she has the status of *niddah*; if it comes at other times, she may be a *zavah*.

19. שבעה ימים — *Seven days*. No matter how great or small the flow, the woman becomes *tamei* (*Rashi*, *Sifra*). The contamination extends for seven days. Even if the discharge continued for all of that time, according to Scriptural law, she may immerse herself on the eighth day, provided the flow had stopped on the seventh. The halachic requirement that a *niddah* count seven clean days before her immersion is a Rabbinic enactment based on the custom adopted by righteous Jewish women and approved by the Sages (*Niddah* 66a).

בגדיה — *In her state of separation*. Throughout the seven-day period, she is ritually contaminated to the same degree as a *zav*, and she must

כ יטמא עד-הָעֶרֶב: וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר תִּשָּׁכַב עָלָיו
בְּנִדְתָּהּ יִטְמָא וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר-תִּשָּׁב עָלָיו יִטְמָא:
כא וְכֹל-הַנֹּגֵעַ בְּמִשְׁכַּבָּהּ יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְרֹחֶץ
כב בַּמִּים וְטָמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְכֹל-הַנֹּגֵעַ בְּכֹל-
כָּלִי אֲשֶׁר-תִּשָּׁב עָלָיו יִכָּבֵס בְּגָדָיו וְרֹחֶץ
כג בַּמִּים וְטָמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְאִם עַל-הַמִּשְׁכָּב
הוא או עַל-הַכֵּלִי אֲשֶׁר-הוא יִשְׁבֶּת-עָלָיו
כד בְּנִגְעוּ-בּוֹ יִטְמָא עַד-הָעֶרֶב: וְאִם שָׁכַב
יִשָּׁכַב אִישׁ אִתָּהּ וְתָהִי נִדְתָּהּ עָלָיו וְטָמֵא
שְׁבַעַת יָמִים וְכֹל-הַמִּשְׁכָּב אֲשֶׁר-יִשָּׁכַב
כה עָלָיו יִטְמָא: וְאִשָּׁה כִּי-יִזְוֹב

therefore separate herself from people or things that are required to remain ritually pure.

23. Or if — *Or if someone is upon the bedding.* Not only does someone become *tamei* if he touches her bedding, as in the previous verse, he also becomes *tamei* if he lies on or supports his weight upon her bedding, riding equipment, or furniture even without touching it. This is possible if the contaminated item in question was covered by blankets that prevented direct contact with it. In this case as in that of the previous verse, the person's garments also become contaminated (*Rashi, Sifra*).

או עַל-הַכֵּלִי — *Or the utensil upon which she is sitting.* This part of the

verse makes no mention of contamination of garments — but verse 22 has said clearly that sitting on furniture *does* contaminate the clothing of one who touches them. Consequently, the Sages understand this phrase to refer not to furniture but to riding equipment. Thus, the riding equipment of a *niddah* has the same law as that given above (v. 10) in the case of a *zav* (*Rashi, Sifra*).⁽¹⁾

עַד-הָעֶרֶב — *He becomes contaminated until evening.* [Although the verse does not mention immersion in a *mikveh*, it is clear that no *tumah* can ever be removed without immersion, as mentioned specifically regarding *niddah* in verses 21 and 27, and throughout the passage of *zav*.]

1. If the verse is referring to riding equipment, why does it speak of *the utensil upon which she is sitting*, which implies that the subject is furniture? By avoiding explicit mention of riding equipment, the Torah teaches a moral lesson. Since there is a degree of immodesty in the posture of a woman astride a horse, the Torah avoids use of the term *upon which she rides*. This shows how important it is to refrain from even a hint of coarseness in one's speech (*Pesachim* 3a, with *Tos.*).

15 shall remain contaminated until the evening. ²⁰ Anything upon which she may recline during her state of separation shall become contaminated; and anything upon which she sits shall become contaminated. ²¹ Anyone who touches her bedding shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and remain contaminated until evening. ²² Anyone who touches any utensil upon which she will sit, shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and remain contaminated until evening. ²³ Or if someone is upon the bedding or the utensil upon which she is sitting, when he touches it, he becomes contaminated until evening. ²⁴ If a man lies with her, then her state of separation will be upon him and he becomes contaminated for seven days; any bedding upon which he may recline shall become contaminated.

24. וְהָיָה גִדְּתָהּ עָלָיו — Then her state of separation will be upon him. He acquires a contamination of the same duration as hers. If he were to cohabit with her on the fifth day of her contamination, he would become *tamei* for a full seven days, even though she would be eligible to immerse herself at the end of her own seven days (Rashi, Sifra).

יִטְמָא — Shall become contaminated. This term seems to be redundant, because the verse has already said that he acquires her degree of contamination. If so, then, like her, he should contaminate bedding to such a degree that it will contaminate not only the person who touches the bedding, but that person's clothing as well. Why, then, must the verse tell us that the bedding shall become contaminated? The Sages derive, therefore, that this term is intended

to teach that although his bedding is contaminated it does not have the same *tumah* as does her bedding. Although her bedding causes even garments to become *tamei*, his bedding is only "contaminated," implying that it has a lesser degree of *tumah*: It can convey contamination only to food and drink but not to people and vessels (Sifra).

25-30. Zavah

According to the tradition taught to Moses at Sinai, there are seven days during which a discharge gives a woman the *niddah* status of the previous verses. Under Scriptural law, if there is a discharge during this period, she counts seven days from the onset of the flow, and, provided the flow has stopped before the end of the seven-day period, she immerses herself the following night.

זוב דמָה ימים רבים בלא עת־נִדְתָּה אוֹ כִי־
תִזוּב עַל־נִדְתָּה כָּל־יָמֶי זֹב טִמְאַתָּה בִּימֵי
נִדְתָּה תִהְיֶה טִמְאָה הוּא: כָּל־הַמְשָׁכָב אֲשֶׁר
תִּשְׁכַּב עָלָיו כָּל־יָמֵי זֻכָּה בְּמִשְׁכָּב נִדְתָּה
יִהְיֶה־לָּהּ וְכָל־הַכָּלִי אֲשֶׁר תִּשָּׁב עָלָיו טִמְא
יִהְיֶה בְּטִמְאַת נִדְתָּה: וְכָל־הַנוֹגֵעַ בָּם יִטְמָא
וְכִכָּס בְּגָדָיו וְרֹחֵץ בַּמִּים וְטִמָּא עַד־הָעֶרֶב:
וְאִם־טִהְרָה מִזֻּכָּה וְסִפְרָה־לָּהּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים
וְאַחֵר תִּטְהָר: וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי תִקַּח־לָהּ שֵׁתִי

Any flow during those seven days is a *niddah* flow, and even discharges on consecutive days would not make her a *zavah*.

Only after those seven days can she become a *zavah*. For at least the next eleven days, any discharge is treated as a *zavah* flow. Once those eleven days have ended, it is possible for her to resume the status of a *niddah*. However, if she had become a *major zavah* — as described below in (b) — she can become a *niddah* again only if there have been seven uninterrupted days with no discharge. If she has discharges regularly without seven “clean” days — i.e., days free of discharge — she remains with the *zavah* status indefinitely until there are seven clean days (Rashi, Ramban; see Tur and Bais Yosef, Yoreh De’ah 183).

[Rambam has a different way of computing the respective seven-day periods of *niddah* and eleven-day periods of *zavah*. See Hil. Issurei Biah 6:1-6 and Maggid Mishneh.]

During the eleven-day period

when the *zavah* laws apply, there are two degrees of stringency, as derived from this passage:

(a) *Minor Zavah*. זָכָה קִטְנָה, *Minor Zavah*. If a woman has a discharge during the eleven-day period, and there is no further discharge during that day — even if the flow did not cease until just before sunset — she may immerse herself the next morning, but it is forbidden to cohabit until evening. [Under Rabbinical law she must wait until evening to immerse herself.] This requirement to observe a full day without a discharge is known as *שומרת יום כְּנָגֵד יוֹם*, *observing a day [of cleanness] for a day [of discharge]*. Even if she has discharges on two consecutive days, she follows the same procedure, i.e., provided there is a cessation of flow before sunset, she may immerse herself the next morning.

(b) *Major Zavah*. זָכָה גְּדֹלָה, *Major Zavah*. If she has discharges on three consecutive days during the eleven-day period, she is *tamei* until she counts seven consecutive days without any dis-

²⁵ If a woman's blood flows for many days outside of her period of separation, or if she has a flow after her separation, all the days of her contaminated flow shall be like the days of her separation; she is contaminated. ²⁶ Any bedding upon which she may lie throughout the days of her flow shall be to her like the bedding of her state of separation; any vessel upon which she may sit shall be contaminated, like the contamination of her state of separation. ²⁷ Anyone who touches them shall become contaminated; he shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the water, and remain contaminated until evening. ²⁸ If she ceases her flow, she must count seven days for herself, and afterwards she can be purified.

²⁹ On the eighth day she shall take for herself two

charge, following which she immerses herself and brings her offerings. Only after seven discharge-free days are her discharges once again treated like those of a *niddah*, and she resumes the cycle described above.

Unlike a *zav*, whose three discharges may come even in very close proximity to one another, the discharges of a *zavah* must be on consecutive days. Regarding the laws briefly outlined above in (a) and (b), even many discharges on the same day have the halachic status of a single discharge.

25. ימים רבים — *Many days*. The plural *days* is sufficient to indicate that there must be a minimum of two days. The additional word *many* implies that this condition — known as *major zavah* [see above, (c)] — requires a flow of three days (Rashi, Sifra).

בְּלֹא צְהַרְהָהּ — *Outside of her*

period of separation. As explained in the prefatory remarks, the days of potential *zivah* can begin only after the seven *niddah* days are over. Thus the sense of this phrase is that she is now past her *niddah* days (Rashi, Sifra).

עַל־נִדְהָהּ — *After her separation*. The previous phrase referred to the day after the seven *niddah* days. Now the Torah adds that the *zavah* condition need not begin immediately after those seven days. It can begin *beyond her separation period* as well, i.e., any time during the eleven-day *zavah*-period, as explained in the prefatory remarks, even if a day or more after the seven *niddah* days has gone by (Rashi, Sifra).

וְאִם־צָהָרָהּ — *If she ceases [lit. becomes purified]*. See commentary to v. 13.

וְאַחֲרַיִם — *And afterwards she*

תָּרִים אוֹ שְׁנֵי בְּנֵי יוֹנָה וְהִבִּיֵּאָה אוֹתָם
 5 אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: וַעֲשֵׂה
 הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הָאֶחָד חֲטָאת וְאֶת-הָאֶחָד עֹלָה
 וּכְפָר עָלֶיהָ הַכֹּהֵן לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מִזֹּב טְמֵאתָה:
 מַפְטִיר לא וְהִזְרִתָם אֶת-בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִטְמֵאתָם וְלֹא
 יָמָתוּ בְּטְמֵאתָם בְּטִמְאָם אֶת-מִשְׁכְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר
 לֵב בְּתוֹכָם: זֹאת תוֹרַת הַזָּב וְאֲשֶׁר תֵּצֵא מִמֶּנּוּ
 לֵג שֹׁכֵב־זֶרַע לְטְמֵאָה-בָּהּ: וְהִדְוָה בְּנִדְתָּהּ
 וְהִזָּב אֶת-זוֹבּוֹ לְזָכָר וּלְנִקְבָּהּ וּלְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
 יִשְׁכַּב עִם-טְמֵאָה:

can be purified. After counting seven days without any discharge, she may immerse herself and proceed with the offerings.

31. וְלֹא יָמָתוּ — *And they shall not die.* As indicated by the conclusion of the verse, this "death" refers to *kares*, the spiritual excision that punishes those who enter the Temple complex while contaminated (*Rashi*).⁽¹⁾

People who cohabit during the *niddah* period are also punished by *kares*, but our chapter deals

only with contamination, not with the penalties for immorality. Those prohibitions and the penalties for them are found in chapters 18 and 20.

32. הַזָּב — *The man with a discharge.* This verse juxtaposes a *zav* with someone who has had a seminal discharge (*baal keri*, as in vs.16-18). This teaches that a *zav* who has had only one discharge has the same status as a *baal keri*. In the next verse, the reference to a discharge speaks of

1. In commanding that the Jewish people separate themselves from contamination, the Torah uses the verb וַתִּנָּחֶם (to be crowned), which can also be interpreted as derived from the word כִּנָּה, crown. It is a mark of Israel's majesty that it rises above contamination, separates itself from earthly

15 turtledoves or two young pigeons; she shall bring them
30-33 to the Kohen, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.

³⁰ The Kohen shall make one a sin-offering and one an elevation-offering; the Kohen shall atone for her before HASHEM from her contaminating flow.

³¹ You shall separate the Children of Israel from their contamination; and they shall not die as a result of their contamination if they contaminate My Tabernacle that is among them. ³² This is the teaching concerning the man with a discharge, and from whom there is a seminal discharge, through which he becomes contaminated; ³³ and concerning a woman who suffers through her separation, and concerning a person who has his flow, whether male or female, and concerning a man who lies with a contaminated woman.

someone who has had two or more discharges, whose laws were discussed in verses 1-15.

According to the Masoretic note appearing at the end of the *sidrah*, there are 90 verses in

the *sidrah*, numerically corresponding to the mnemonic עידו [his witness]. This alludes to the nature of the God-imposed malady of *tzaraas*, which bears witness to the fact that the victim has sinned. The *haftarah* begins with II Kings 7:3.

נשלם סדרה מצורע בעזרת האל

contamination and devotes itself to God's holy service. Those who succeed in doing so are worthy of God's crown (*Sfas Emes*).

R' Shmuel of Sochatchov commented homiletically that our verse stresses those who are guilty of contaminating the Sanctuary. He said sadly, "If people wish to indulge in sinful behavior and that is what they enjoy, it is bad, but they have freedom of choice. But when such people insist on imposing their standards on holy places and bringing contamination into the Sanctuary, that is the greatest of tragedies!"

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APPENDIX:

Summary of the Laws of Korbanos

by Rabbi Yehezkel Danziger

Rabbi Hersh Goldwurm

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Summary of the Laws of Korbanos

by Rabbi Yehezkel Danziger / Rabbi Hersh Goldwurm

A major portion of the Book of *Vayikra/Leviticus* is devoted to the laws of *korbanos* — the various animal, bird and flour offerings¹ to be offered in the *Mishkan* [Tabernacle] and later in the *Beis Hamikdash* [Holy Temple] in Jerusalem. The first seven chapters of *Vayikra* deal exclusively with these laws and the topic occupies a prominent place in many later chapters as well. Inasmuch as the Temple service is the special function of the Kohanim, for which they were endowed with a distinctive level of sanctity, and in view of the fact that *Vayikra* deals with many of the other laws involving or requiring Kohanim (such as ruling on *tzaraas* afflictions; see chapters 14 and 15), it is not surprising that the Sages refer to this Book as תורת כהנים, *Toras Kohanim*, the Laws of the Priests.

These laws are very complex and unfamiliar even to many students of Torah, due to the fact that they cannot be practiced in the absence of the Temple. Although all these laws trace back to the Scriptural verses, it is the nature of the Written Torah to be difficult to grasp in all its details without the further elucidations of the Mishnah, Talmud, and later codifiers of the law. In the hope of clarifying this topic for the general reader, we present a summary of the fundamental rules of *korbanos*. This will delineate the different types of offerings and the basic laws governing their obligation, sacrifice, and disqualification, as well as general rules relating to the Temple service and the use of consecrated articles.

This summary will focus exclusively on the legal and procedural aspects of this subject and will not touch on the philosophical and metaphysical facets of the matter, which have been discussed in the Overview to this volume. For the sake of clarity and completeness, we will include discussions relative to virtually all offerings, even those not discussed in *Vayikra*. Wherever appropriate, we will include references to the Biblical passages containing these laws. References containing merely a number without the name of any Book refer to verses in *Leviticus*.

The format of the summary is as follows:

1. The word קרבן, *korban*, is generally translated *offering* or *sacrifice*. Neither of these words, however, does justice to the concept of קרבן (see Overview), though for lack of a better term we are forced to use them. The Hebrew term קרבן is used by the Torah for both animate and inanimate offerings (see, for example, verses 1:2 and 2:1).

- Section I: Outline of the Offerings** — a brief outline of the sacrificial service and the different categories of offerings
- Section II: The Participants** — who brings the offerings and who may perform the service
- Section III: The Olah / Elevation-Offering**
- Section IV: The Chatas / Sin-Offering**
- Section V: The Asham / Guilt-Offering**
- Section VI: The Shelamim / Peace-Offering**
- Section VII: The Todah / Thanksgiving-Offering**
- Section VIII: The Bechor / Firstborn, Maaser / Tithe, and Pesach Offerings**
- Section IX: The Bird Offerings**
- Section X: The Minchah / Meal-Offerings**
- Section XI: The Nesachim / Libations, Ketoress / Incense, and Rare Offerings**
- Section XII: The Miluim / Inauguration Offerings** — the special offerings made at the inauguration of the *Mishkan*
- Section XIII: Disqualifications** — the situations and conditions that disqualify an offering or the people involved in offering it
- Section XIV: Levels of Sanctity** — of offerings and consecrated things.
- Section XV: Me'ilah** — misappropriation of sacred property
- Section XVI: Offerings Outside the Temple** — when they are permitted or forbidden
- Section XVII: Structure of the Mishkan / Tabernacle and Altar** — the details relevant to understanding the requirements of the sacrifices
- Section XVIII: Table of Biblical Measures**
- Section XIX: Charts**

Outline of the Offerings

A. Substances Used In Offerings

The Torah establishes four primary classes of offerings: animal, bird, flour and wine. Only certain species or types of each class may be used, and even those that are fit are restricted to specific categories of offerings.

There are only three species of animals which may be used for offerings (1:2): בקר, *cattle*, כבשים, *sheep*, and עזים, *goats*.^[1] Similarly, there are only two species of birds which may be brought: תורים, *turtledoves*, and בני יונה, *young pigeons* (1:14). Offerings made of flour (known as מנחות, *minchah*-offerings or meal-offerings) come primarily from wheat, but in two instances they are made of barley flour (2:14, *Numbers* 5:15). Wine offerings are brought only from unsweetened grape wine.

B. Categories of Offerings

The Torah specifies several distinct categories of offerings. These are distinguished not only by the purposes for which they are brought, but by the manner in which they are offered and the way in which they are consumed. Each of these will be explained in its own section, and the following listing is intended only to familiarize the reader with these basic terms:

1. Animal Offerings

There are eight categories of offerings from animals. These are the חטאת, *chatas*/sin offering, and אשם, *asham*/guilt offering, the two types of required offerings that atone for specific sins; the עלה, *olah*/elevation offering, and שלמים, *shelamim*/peace offering, the most common types of voluntary offerings (though these too are occasionally required by the Torah); the תודה, *todah*/thanksgiving offering; בכור, *bechor*/firstborn offering; מעשר, *maaser*/tithe offering; and פסח, *pesach*

1. The category of בקר, *cattle*, includes פר, *bull*, פרה, *cow*, עגל, (male) *calf*, and עגלה, (female) *calf*. The term כבשים, *sheep*, [singular: כבש] generally refers to (male) *lambs* [כבשית, *female lamb*] though adult male and female sheep are also occasionally meant. Within the category of sheep, however, the Torah makes a separate class for the איל, *ram*, which is specifically an adult male sheep. The category of עזים, *goats* includes שעיר, *adult* *goats* (male and female), as well as שעיר עזים and קעיר עזים, *kids* (male and female).

offering. Since the customary English translations of these terms and the distinctions implicit in them are not very familiar even to the English-speaking audience, this summary will primarily use the Hebrew terms in their transliterated form.

2. Bird Offerings

There are only two categories of bird offerings: *olah* and *chatas*.

3. Minchah/Meal-Offerings

Meal-offerings are not distinguished by the different types of categories characteristic of animal and bird offerings. Their distinctions are based on a number of factors, the two most basic of which are the method in which they are prepared and whether the *minchah* is completely or only partially burned on the Altar. Most meal-offerings are offered in their raw flour state mixed with oil. This is known as a *מִנְחַת סֶלֶת*, fine flour *minchah*. There are also two types of baked offerings [מִנְחָה תְּנוּרָה]: the *חֲלִיטֹת*, loaves, and *רְקִיקִים*, wafers; and two fried offerings: *מִנְחַת מַחְבֵּת*, griddle *minchah*, and *מִנְחַת מִרְחֶשֶׁת*, pan *minchah*. These along with the other divisions of the meal-offering will be explained below.

C. The Essence of a Sacrifice

There are two fundamental concepts relating to offerings which conflict with the generally held notions of sacrificial offerings. The first is that for animal and bird offerings, the essential part of their offering is the application of their blood to the Altar, not the burning of their meat or fats. The application of the blood is what atones, and it is the application of the blood which validates the offering and discharges its owner's obligation. Although the Torah generally requires that some parts of the offering (and, in the case of the *olah*, all of it) be burnt on the Altar as well, this burning is not critical to the overall validity of the offering — the offering is considered valid even if none of its meat or fats are ever burnt on the Altar.

The second point to note is that for most offerings, only a small part of the fat and internal organs are presented for burning on the Altar [these are known as the *אֵמֹרִין*, *emurin*, sacrificial parts]; the remainder of the offering is eaten either by the Kohanim, or by the owners of the offerings and their guests. This is true of the meal-offerings as well; in most cases, only a small portion of their flour is removed and burned on the Altar while the remainder is eaten by the Kohanim.

Thus we see that there are three fundamental components to an animal offering — its blood, whose application to the Altar achieves the atonement; its sacrificial parts, which are removed and burned on the Altar; and the

remainder of its meat, which is eaten. [Bird offerings differ somewhat in this regard, as will be explained in the section dealing with them.] Meal-offerings, however, have only two components: the portion burned on the Altar and the remainder that is eaten.

D. The Sacrificial Procedure

The set of procedures involved in offering an animal, bird, or flour offering is known as its עֲבוּדָה, *avodah*, *sacrificial procedure*.^[1] Each class of offering has a different *avodah*, but with the exception of the wine offering, the respective *avodos* (plural of *avodah*) parallel each other.

Before any offering may be brought, the item to be offered must be properly designated as an offering. This usually takes the form of a verbal designation [קְרִישָׁת פָּה], but it can also be brought about through the purchase of the required item with money which had been previously designated for the acquisition of such an offering. This is not in itself an *avodah*, but a necessary preliminary to it.

1. Animal Offerings

✎ Semichah

Before the actual offering of an animal begins, there is another preliminary rite that is performed. The owner of the offering places his hands on the animal's head and leans down with all his strength.

As he does so, he recites his confession (וְדִי), stating the sin for which the offering is intended to atone. This act is known as קְמִיכָה, *semichah*, lit., *leaning* (1:4; 3:2,8,13; 4:4,15,24,29,33).^[2] *Semichah* is performed only for personal offerings not communal ones,^[3] only by men, and only on animal offerings not bird or *minchah*-offerings. *Semichah* is not considered an *avodah* but a preliminary to it. Its omission does not invalidate the offering.

✎ The Essential Avodah

The essence of the sacrificial process for an animal offering is its blood *avodah*. This consists of four procedures:

1. The word עֲבוּדָה, *avodah*, is also used to refer to each of the individual essential acts of the procedure.

2. In the case of *semichah* on offerings which are not offered in atonement for a sin, such as a *shelamim* or *todah*, one does not confess but rather recites words of praise to God (Rambam, *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 3:13,15).

3. There is one exception to this: פֶּרֶקְלֵט חֵטֵּאת, the *chatas* for a matter 'hidden' from the Congregation (4:13-21) — in which three members of the Sanhedrin perform the *semichah* (4:15).

(a) שחיטה, slaughter

The sacrificial animal is slaughtered the same way that a non-sacrificial animal is slaughtered — through *shechitah*; and all the rules that apply to the *shechitah* of ordinary animals (for kosher meat) apply to the slaughter of offerings as well. The *shechitah* must be performed in the חצר המשכן, Courtyard of the Mishkan [or, in later times, the עזרה, Temple Courtyard; this latter, more inclusive term will be used in this summary for the sake of brevity]. For certain offerings (viz., the *chatas*, *olah*, *asham*, and communal *shelamim*), the *shechitah* must be done specifically in the northern half of the Courtyard. However, it need not be done by a Kohen.

(b) קבלה, receiving

The blood of the slaughtered offering must be caught in a כלי שרת, sacred vessel, as it spurts from the animal's neck. This must be done by a Kohen.

(c) הולכה, carrying

The vessel containing the blood is carried to the appropriate part of the Altar; this too must be done by a Kohen.

(d) זריקה, throwing

The Kohen applies the blood to the Altar. The procedure for applying and the number of applications varies for different offerings, as will be explained in the respective sections. [See also the chart of the animal offerings at the end of the summary.]

After the offering's blood is applied, its אֶמּוּרִין [*emurin*], sacrificial parts, are removed and placed on the Altar for burning. The sacrificial parts are the same for all animal offerings except the *olah*. They consist of the (hard) fats around the body cavity, and the fats upon the stomachs, kidneys, and flanks; the kidneys themselves, the diaphragm, and part of the liver (3:3-4); in a sheep the tail is also a sacrificial part (verse 9). In the case of an *olah*, the entire animal is dismembered and burned on the Altar. All offering substances burned on the Altar are salted before being placed on it.

Once the sacrificial procedure has been completed, the meat of the offering is eaten, with the exception of the meat of the *olah* and some types of *chatas*, as will be explained below.]

2. Bird Offerings

The procedure for offering a bird resembles that of the animal offering, but differs in some crucial ways.

(a) מְלִיקָה, *melikah/nipping*

In contrast to animal offerings which are slaughtered with a knife using the procedure known as *shechitah*, bird offerings are killed through a procedure called *melikah* (1:15, 5:8). This involves the Kohen piercing the back of the bird's neck with his right thumbnail and cutting through the neck until he severs either the esophagus or windpipe in the case of the bird *chatas* (1:8), or both in the case of the *olah*. Thus, *melikah*-slaughter differs from the more common *shechitah*-slaughter in three ways — the cutting is done with the Kohen's thumbnail rather than a knife, the neck is cut from the back rather than the throat, and in the case of the *chatas*, only one 'pipe' is cut.^[1]

(b) מִתֵּן דָּם, application of blood

In another departure from the *avodah* procedure for animals, a bird's blood is not received in a כְּלִי שֶׁרֶת, sacred vessel, but is applied directly from the neck to the Altar wall. [The procedure for this will be more fully described below in the section on bird offerings.] Accordingly, the bird offering has only two critical *avodos* — slaughter (by means of *melikah*) and application of the blood.

3. Minchah/Meal Offerings

Meal-offerings differ more substantially in the form of their *avodah*, inasmuch as they are not blood offerings. After designating the flour to be used in the offering and bringing it to the Temple, the *minchah*'s ingredients require קְדוּשָׁה בְּכֵלִי, sanctification in a vessel, which is accomplished by placing the flour (and other ingredients) in a כְּלִי שֶׁרֶת, sacred Temple vessel. It must also undergo a preliminary procedure called הִנָּשָׂה, bringing near, in which the vessel containing the *minchah* is brought to the southwest corner of the Altar and touched to it. The *minchah* is now ready for its offering, which consists of four *avodah* procedures, just like the animal offering:

(a) קְמִיצָה, *kemitzah*

A small portion is removed by the Kohen using the middle three fingers of his right hand. [This procedure will be more fully detailed in section X.] This act is known as *kemitzah*, and the

1. *Melikah* is not a valid form of slaughter for a bird that is not an offering, and if used for a non-sacrificial bird, it renders the meat unkosher. It is also never valid for an animal, whether an offering or not. However, a bird offering *must* be slaughtered by means of *melikah*; *shechitah*-slaughter invalidates it. A bird offering properly slaughtered through *melikah* may be eaten.

portion removed is called the קמץ, *kometz* (2:2). This must be done by a Kohen.

(b) נְחִינָה בְּכֵלִי, placement in a vessel

The *kometz* is placed by the Kohen in yet another sacred vessel.

(c) הוֹלָכָה, carrying

The vessel containing the *kometz* is carried to the Altar.

(d) הַקְטָרָה, burning on the Altar

The *kometz* is thrown onto the Altar and burned.

As can be readily seen, these four procedures correspond to a large extent to the blood *avodah* of the animal offering. The burning of the *kometz* does double duty in that it also corresponds to the burning of the animal offering's *emurin*. Once the *kometz* has been burned, the remainder of the meal-offering is eaten by the Kohanim.

4. Wine Offerings

The procedure for offering wine does not resemble the procedures listed above. The wine designated for this offering [known as נְסָחִים, *nesachim* (libations)] is brought to the Temple and placed in a sacred vessel. It is taken to the southwest corner of the Altar and poured out at the top of the Altar from where it runs down to a spot at the foot of the Altar. [See further in section XI-A.]

5. The Altar

The Altar upon which all this activity takes place is known as the מִזְבֵּחַ הַחוּצוֹן, *Outer Altar*, because this Altar stands outside the Sanctuary building in the Courtyard of the Temple. In *Chumash* it is also referred to as the מִזְבֵּחַ הָעֹלָה, *Altar of the Olah* (see 4:10), i.e., the Altar on which the *olah* and almost all other animal offerings (as well as bird and flour offerings) are offered. The Temple [whether the *Mishkan* used in the Wilderness and early years of the settlement in Israel, or the *Beis Hamikdash* in Jerusalem] is also equipped with a second Altar, which stands inside the קֹדֶשׁ, *Holy*, of the Sanctuary. It is known as the מִזְבֵּחַ הַפְּנִימִי, *Inner Altar*, or the מִזְבֵּחַ הַקְטָרֶת, *Incense Altar*, because its primary function is for burning the daily incense offering (*Exodus* 30:1-10). However, the blood of certain rare *chattas* offerings is also applied on it. The Torah also refers to it as the מִזְבֵּחַ הַזָּהָב, *Golden Altar*, because it was gold-plated, in contrast to the Outer Altar which was copper-plated.

SECTION II: The Participants

Offerings are brought both by the individual and the community; they are sometimes voluntary and at other times required. There are generally two parties involved in an offering: the party giving the offering — known as the *owner* — and the one performing the *avodah* (offering service).

A. Owner

The owner of the offering is the person who has consecrated the animal, bird, or flour to be an offering, or for whose benefit an offering has been consecrated by someone else. When the *avodah* has been performed correctly, the offering is *קַרְבָּן*, *provides acceptance*, on the owner's behalf — i.e., it atones for him and fulfills his obligation.

The only procedure in the offering which the owner must perform himself is *semichah*, which precedes the actual *avodah* (see above, section I-D1). He is also responsible to see to it that the owner's portion of the meat is eaten (by himself and/or others) within the requisite time. The owner, of course, has the privilege of apportioning the meat as he sees fit.

B. Kohanim

Almost every *avodah* (sacrificial service) must be performed by a male, adult Kohen; if it is performed by a non-Kohen it is invalid and usually invalidates the offering completely. To be qualified to perform the *avodah*, a Kohen must be free of any (significant) physical blemish (21:16-24). [The disqualifying blemishes are listed in Mishnah, *Bechoros* chapters 6-7, and *Rambam, Hil. Bias Hamikdash* chapters 7-8.] There are also a number of circumstantial requirements for a Kohen performing the *avodah*, for example, that he be free of *tumah*-contamination, that he wash his hands and feet before beginning the *avodah*, that he be dressed in his priestly vestments, et al. These are listed in *Zevachim* 2:1. [See below, section XIII.]

C. Non-Kohanim

Although most of the service must be performed exclusively by Kohanim, the slaughter of an animal offering (but not of a bird offering) may be done even by a non-Kohen. Similarly, the hide of an offering may be skinned, and the *olah* may be dismembered by a non-Kohen. The various preparatory procedures of a *minchah* (meal-offering) which will be enumerated below (section X), may also be done by a non-Kohen. The *avodah* of the *minchah*, however, must be done by a Kohen.

The Olah/Elevation Offering

The first category of offering delineated by the Torah is the *עֹלָה*, *olah*, elevation offering (chapter 1). The *olah* is not designated as an atonement offering for any specific transgression, [though according to the Sages it is the proper offering to be brought by one who wishes to atone for having knowingly transgressed a *מצוות עשה*, *positive precept*]. Rather, it is one of the two major types of voluntary offerings, brought as a mark of one's desire to 'elevate' himself spiritually (see Overview and commentary to verse 1:2), as well as an obligatory offering to mark various occasions and situations. The *olah* must be a male animal, but it may be either cattle, sheep or goat, and may be either a young or mature animal. However, certain occasions may require an *olah* to be of a specific species and age. Listed below are the many instances in which the *olah* is a required personal or communal offering (i.e., an offering made on behalf of the entire people to fulfill a communal obligation).

A. Sacrificial Procedure

The distinctive feature of the *olah* offering is that it is *בָּלִיל*, totally burned (except for its hide) upon the Outer Altar; no part of its meat is eaten. It is slaughtered in the northern part of the Temple Courtyard. The blood is applied to the lower part of the northeast and southwest corners of the Outer Altar, by tossing it from the vessel in which it is held. This type of application is known specifically as *וִרְיקָה*, *throwing*. The Kohen aims the blood in such a way that it splashes on both sides of the corner, so that the blood in effect reaches all four walls of the Altar. This is known in Mishnaic parlance as *שְׁתֵּים שָׁהוּ אַרְבַּע*, *two [applications] that are [in reality] four* (Zevachim 5:4). [The term *וִרְיקָה* is also used by the Mishnah and Talmud in a borrowed sense to refer to the blood applications of *all* offerings, even those which are not 'thrown.'] The hide is removed [and belongs to the Kohanim], the carcass is dismembered, and all the pieces are carried by the Kohanim up to the top of the Altar, salted, and tossed on the fires.

Every *olah*, whether communal or personal, voluntary or obligatory, must be accompanied by a *מִנְחַת נְסָכִים* [*minchas nesachim*], libation *minchah* offering. This consists of a *minchah* of flour and oil, and a *nesekh* (libation) of wine. The amount required varies according to the type of animal being offered; this will be detailed below in the sections on *minchah* offerings and wine libations.

B. Circumstances Requiring an Olah

The following is a list of all the situations in which an *olah* is brought as a communal offering:

1. תמיד, Tamid/Continual Offering

(Numbers 28:9-10).

The Torah requires that two lambs be offered each day in the Temple as *olah* offerings, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

2. מוסף, Mussaf/Additional Offering

(Numbers chapters 28,29).

On the special days of the year, the Torah requires additional *olah* offerings as part of the Temple service.^[1] The number of these offerings varies according to the occasion. These are:

(a) שבת, Sabbath: 2 lambs

(b) ראש חודש, Rosh Chodesh: 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs.

(c) פסח, Pesach: 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs; this is brought each of the seven days of the festival.

(d) שבועות, Shavuot: 2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs.

(e) ראש השנה, Rosh Hashanah: 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs.

(f) יום הכיפורים, Yom Kippur: 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs.

(g) סוכות, Succot: First day — 13 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs.

The same offering is brought each of the seven days of the festival, except that the number of bulls decreases by one each day, so that on the seventh day — 7 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs were brought.

(h) שמיני עצרת, Shemini Atzeret: 1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs.

3. עלות הבאות עם שתי הלחם, Elevation Offerings

accompanying the Two Loaves Offering (23:18).

On the festival of Shavuot, in addition to the *mussaf* offerings, there is a special offering of two loaves of leavened bread [שתי הלחם]; see below, section X on *minchah*-offerings. These two loaves are accompanied by ten *olah* offerings — 1 bull, 2 rams, and 7 lambs [in addition to a he-goat for a *chatas*, and two lambs as *shelamim* offerings (see below)].

1. The *mussaf* offering of most of these days requires a *chatas* offering as well; see the section on *chatas*. The only exception is that of the Sabbath.

4. עֹלָה הַבָּאָה עִם הָעֶמֶר, Olah accompanying the Omer Offering
(23:9-14).

The *omer* is a communal *minchah* offering brought on the second day of *Pesach*. The Torah requires that it be accompanied by an *olah* offering of a (male) lamb.

5. פֶּר עֲבוּדָה נֶרָה שֶׁל צֶבֶר, Bull for Communal Idolatry
(Numbers 15:22-26).

In conjunction with the male goat brought as a *chatas* for communal idolatry (i.e., idolatry resulting from an erroneous ruling by the Sanhedrin), a bull is brought as an *olah*.



In addition to communal offerings, the following occasions call for an *olah* on the part of an individual:

6. עֹלַת כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל בְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים, Kohen Gadol's Yom Kippur Olah
(16:3).

In addition to the *mussaf* offerings of Yom Kippur, there are also other special offerings brought on this day. Among these are two personal offerings of the Kohen Gadol. One of these is a ram as an *olah* (the other is a *chatas*).^[1]

7. עֹלַת רֵאִיָּה, Pilgrimage Olah (Exodus 23:15,17).

The Torah requires every Jewish man to make a pilgrimage to the Temple three times a year, on the Festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot. Each pilgrim is required to offer an *olah* during the Festival.

8. עֹלַת יִלְדָּה, Olah of a Woman after Childbirth (12:6).

After giving birth to a child, a woman must bring an *olah* (male lamb). The offering is not brought until forty days later in the case of a boy or eighty days afterwards for a girl. [The *olah* is accompanied by a bird *chatas*.] The lamb may be replaced by a bird if the woman is poor (see section on bird offerings).

9. עֹלַת מְצֹרָע, Metzora's Olah (14:10,20).

A *metzora* is a person afflicted with one of a variety of skin discolorations for which the Torah decrees *tumah*-contamination (see

1. However, in contrast to the *chatas* — the Kohen Gadol's bull — which has its blood applied inside the Sanctuary (see *chatas* section), the Kohen Gadol's *olah* has its blood applied on the Outer Altar, as do all *olot*.

chapter 13). Upon healing, the *metzora* must undergo a purification process which includes three offerings, one of which is a male lamb as an *olah* (the others being a *chatas* and *asham*). In the case of an impoverished *metzora*, the lamb may be replaced by a bird (see section on bird offerings).

10. עלת נזיר קדור, **Nazir's Olah** (Numbers 6:14)

A *nazir* is a person who takes upon himself a vow which prohibits him from drinking wine or consuming grape products, cutting his hair, or contaminating himself with the *tumah* of a human corpse (Numbers chapter 6). When he completes the term of his vow, he undergoes a procedure to conclude the *nazir* state and remove the vow and the things prohibited by it. As part of this procedure, he offers three sacrifices, one of which is a male lamb as an *olah* (the other two being a *chatas* and *shelamim*).

11. קרבן הגר, **Convert's offering**

After a non-Jew converts to Judaism, he is required to bring an *olah* (*Gemara, Kereisos* 8b, based on Numbers 15:14).

12. עלת זדבה, **Voluntary Olah** (chapter 1).

An *olah* need not come only to fulfill an obligation; a person may voluntarily donate an *olah*. This type of *olah* may be either a mature or young animal, either of cattle, sheep, or goats. Like every *olah*, however, it must be a male.

13. קין המזבח, **Offerings when the Altar is Idle**

On days when there are few offerings being made, extra *olah* offerings are made so that the Altar not be left idle. These are paid for out of certain surplus funds and are a form of communal donated offering (see Mishnah, *Shekalim* 4:4).

Chatas/Sin Offering

The category of offering most commonly brought to atone for sin is the חטאת, *chatas*, or, *sin offering*. The *chatas* is required by the Torah sometimes as a communal offering made on behalf of the entire people, and sometimes as an individual offering to fulfill a personal obligation. Unlike the *olah*, however, it can never be brought as a voluntary offering; it can be offered only in the circumstances in which the Torah specifically requires that it be offered.

Chatas offerings are of two kinds — פנימיות, *inner* and חיצונית, *outer*. These terms refer to the different places in the Temple where their blood is applied. The חטאת פנימית, *inner chatas*, is the only type of offering that has its blood applied anywhere but on the Outer Altar. Its blood is applied to specified areas inside the אהל מועד, [*Ohel Moed*] *Tent of Meeting*, the Sanctuary building of the *Mishkan*. The Sanctuary has two chambers: the קדש, *Holy*, in which stand the Menorah, *Shulchan* (Golden Table), and the Inner Altar; and the קדש הקדשים, *Holy of Holies*, in which only the ארון, *Holy Ark* (containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments) stands. The two chambers were separated by the פרוכת, *Curtain*. In which of these chambers the blood is applied depends on the type of inner *chatas*.

The blood of a חטאת חיצונית, *outer chatas*, on the other hand, is applied to the Outer Altar, the one which stands in the Courtyard of the Temple, as explained below.

A. חטאות פנימיות, Inner Chatas Offerings

There are five *chatas* offerings whose blood is brought into the Sanctuary for application. Three of these are communal and two are individual; all, however, are obligatory offerings.

1. פַּר שֶׁל יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים, Bull of Yom Kippur (chapter 16).

This is the *chatas* offering required of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur to atone for himself, his family, and the entire family of Kohanim. It is paid for out of his personal funds, and it atones for their inadvertent transgressions of the prohibition of entering the Temple or eating of the offerings while in a state of *tumah*-contamination [טמאת] (מקדש וקדשיו) (16:11, *Rashi*).

❖ **Sacrificial Procedure:** The Kohen Gadol leans his hands on the head of the bull and confesses on behalf of himself, his family, and

his fellow Kohanim and slaughters the bull in the northern part of the Courtyard. He then takes the blood of the *chatas* which is caught in a *קלי שרת* (sacred vessel) into the *קדש הקדשים*, *Holy of Holies*, and dipping his finger into it, sprinkles it eight times between the poles of the Holy Ark. He then goes out to the *קדש*, *Holy*, and sprinkles it eight more times towards the *פרוכת*, *Curtain*, which separates the Holy from the Holy of Holies. Then he mixes the blood with that of the he-goat (see next paragraph) and puts some of the mixture on the horns of the Inner Altar (*מזבח הקטורת*, the Altar used for the daily incense offering), and sprinkles seven times on its top (see chapter 16).

2. *שעיר של יום הכפורים*, **He-goat of Yom Kippur** (chapter 16).

Along with his bull, the Kohen Gadol offers a he-goat as a *chatas*. This is a communal sacrifice brought on behalf of the entire nation to atone for any inadvertent transgressions of the prohibition of entering the Temple or partaking of the offerings while in a state of *tumah* [טמאת] (16:15,16; Mishnah, *Shevuos* 1:2). Thus, the Kohen Gadol's Yom Kippur bull and the communal he-goat of Yom Kippur atone for the same transgression, the former on behalf of the Kohanim, the latter on behalf of the remainder of the people.

✿ **Sacrificial Procedure:** The *avodah* of this Yom Kippur offering is the same as that of the bull, except that the Kohen Gadol does not perform *semichah* on it.⁽¹⁾ The blood is sprinkled eight times in the *קדש הקדשים*, *Holy of Holies*, and another eight times in the *קדש*, *Holy*, towards the *פרוכת*, *Curtain*, which separates the Holy from the Holy of Holies.

The blood *avodah* of the Yom Kippur bull and that of the he-goat are done in sequence: the blood of the bull is sprinkled in the Holy of Holies, followed by the sprinkling of the he-goat's blood there. The Kohen Gadol returns to the blood of the bull and sprinkles it in the Holy and then does the same for the blood of the he-goat (*Yoma* 5:3,4). At this point the remaining blood of the bull is mixed with the remainder of the he-goat's blood (16:18; *Yoma* 5:5). The Kohen dips his finger into the mixed blood and daubs it on the four horns of the Inner Altar (*מזבח הזהב*, *Golden Altar*, the Altar used for the daily incense offering), and then he sprinkles it seven times on the top of this Altar (see chapter 16).

Altogether, then, forty-three blood applications are made inside the *Ohel Moed* on Yom Kippur — eight of the bull and eight of the

1. The confession on behalf of the people is said over the companion to this offering, the he-goat which is taken to a desolate area, known as *Azazel*, and pushed off a cliff (16:22). This second he-goat, however, is not an Altar offering.

he-goat inside the Holy of Holies; eight of each towards the Curtain; four of the combined blood on the horns of the Inner Altar, and seven on its top. These two Yom Kippur offerings are the only ones whose blood is brought into the קֹדֶשׁ הַקֳּדָשִׁים, *Holy of Holies*.

The *emurin* (sacrificial fats and organs) are removed, salted, and burned on the Outer Altar; the remainder of the two carcasses is taken to a site outside the camp (later, outside Jerusalem) and burned.

3. פֶּר הָעֵלָם דָּבָר שֶׁל צָבוּר, **Bull for a Matter that was Hidden from the Congregation** (4:13-21).

This is a communal *chatas* brought by the Sanhedrin (High Court) for a sin transgressed by the people as a result of the court's erroneous ruling. The specific circumstances leading up to this offering are that the Sanhedrin mistakenly permitted something which is actually forbidden and subject to the penalty of כְּרֵת, *karet* (excision); for example, that one of the forbidden fats of an animal (חֵלֶב) was actually permissible. If a majority of the people transgressed the prohibition as a result of the Sanhedrin's ruling (e.g., by eating the forbidden fats), the personal *chatas* that would normally be required of each of these individuals is replaced by this communal *chatas*.^[1]

✎ **Sacrificial Procedure:** Three members of the Sanhedrin perform *semichah* on the head of the bull and confess the sin that was committed. The bull is slaughtered in the northern part of the Courtyard and its blood is taken into the *Ohel Moed*. In the case of this *chatas* and that of the two *inner chatas* which follow below, the blood is applied only in the קֹדֶשׁ, *Holy*, towards the פָּרֹכֶת, *Curtain* (seven times), and on the four horns of the Inner Altar (4:17,18) — a total of eleven applications.^[2] The *emurin* of these offerings are salted and burned on the Outer Altar, and the rest of the offering — its meat, hide, etc. — is burned in a designated place outside camp.

1. The Mishnah in tractate *Horayos* (1:5) records a dispute regarding how many bulls are brought for this offering. In the opinion of R' Meir, one bull is offered on behalf of the entire people. R' Yehudah, however, maintains that each tribe is considered a separate 'congregation', so that twelve bulls must actually be offered. In the opinion of R' Shimon, thirteen bulls are brought — one for each tribe and one for the Court. *Rambam* (*Hilchos Shegagos* 12:1) rules according to R' Yehudah's opinion, that a separate bull must be offered on behalf of each tribe.

2. The sprinkling of this blood should preferably be done by the Kohen Gadol (4:16), although it is not an absolute requirement (see *Mishneh LaMelech* to *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 5:15).

4. **שְׁעִיר עִזִּיָּה נֶחֱרָה שֶׁל צִבּוֹר, He-goat for Idolatry by the Congregation** (Numbers 15:22-26).

This is akin to the previous *chatas*, except that it is brought for an erroneous ruling and transgression involving the worship of a false god. Whereas the *chatas* brought by the Sanhedrin for erroneous rulings involving other *kares*-bearing prohibitions is a bull, the one brought for an error involving idolatry is a he-goat (kid). [Accompanying this *chatas* is a bull (Numbers 15:24), which is offered as an *olah* on the Outer Altar (ibid.; see *Olah* section, III-B5).]¹

❖ **Sacrificial Procedure:** The sacrificial procedure for this inner *chatas* is the same as for the previous one, except that *semichah* is not performed (*Gemara, Menachos* 92a).

5. **פֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה מְשִׁיחַ, Bull of the Anointed Kohen** (4:1-12).

The term *Anointed Kohen* refers to the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) because he was elevated to his post by being anointed with the שֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה, *anointing oil*. The Kohen Gadol brings a *chatas* under conditions similar to those for which the Sanhedrin is required to bring the פֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה מְסֻמָּה, *bull for a matter that was hidden* — that is, a transgression resulting from an erroneous ruling. However, the erroneous ruling is the Kohen Gadol's rather than the Sanhedrin's. Should he erroneously permit for himself something which is really forbidden under the penalty of *kares*, and then act upon his own ruling, he brings this *chatas*. However, since the *chatas*-obligation is dependent on the Kohen Gadol making an erroneous ruling, the offering is brought by the Kohen Gadol only if he is a scholar qualified to issue such rulings (*Mishnah, Horayos* 2:1). If he transgresses merely because he did not realize what he was doing, he is exempt from any *chatas*, even the individual *chatas* brought by any other Jew in such circumstances (*Mishnah, Horayos* 2:3).]

❖ **Sacrificial Procedure:** The sacrificial procedure for this inner *chatas* is the same as for the פֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה מְסֻמָּה שֶׁל צִבּוֹר, *bull for a matter that was hidden from the Congregation*. The Kohen Gadol performs *semichah* on the offering and confesses his sin (4:4), and sprinkles the blood in the קֹדֶשׁ, *Holy*, towards the פְּרוֹכֵת, *Curtain* (4:5,6), and on the horns of the Inner Altar, eleven applications in all. It is not an absolute requirement that the Kohen Gadol do the sprinkling himself, though it is preferable (*Rambam, Maaseh HaKorbanos* 5:15).

1. As with the bull brought for errors by the Sanhedrin in decisions relating to other *kares*-bearing prohibitions, there is a dispute about how many offerings must be brought. Here too, *Rambam* (*Hilchos Shegagos* 12:1) follows the view of R' Yehudah that a separate offering is brought for each tribe. Thus, twelve he-goat *chatas* offerings are brought, along with twelve bulls as *olah* offerings.

B.

חֲטָאוֹת חִיצוֹנוֹת – Outer Chatas Offerings

Outer *chataos* are *chatas* offerings whose blood is applied only on the Outer Altar, rather than inside the קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדָשִׁים *Holy of Holies*, or קֹדֶשׁ *Holy*.

❖ **Sacrificial Procedure:** The sacrificial procedure for all outer *chataos* is the same. The owner of the offering performs *semichah*, the offering is slaughtered in the northern part of the Courtyard, and the blood is taken to the Altar. In contrast to all other offerings, whose blood is applied to the lower half of the Altar's walls, the blood of a *chatas* is applied to the four קַרְנוֹת (corners or horns) which crown the top of the Outer Altar. It is also not thrown onto the Altar, as is done for most other offerings, but rather daubed on by finger. The Kohen dips his finger into the vessel containing the blood, and then runs his finger down the corner of the horn (4:25,30). Its *emurin* (sacrificial parts) are salted and burned upon the Outer Altar, and its meat is eaten by male Kohanim, within the Courtyard, for up to a day and a night [that is for the remainder of the day of its offering and the night which follows] (4:22-31).

Circumstances Requiring an Outer Chatas:

1. חֲטָאת יָחִיד, **Chatas of the Individual** (4:27-35).

The most common type of *chatas* is the one brought by an individual who mistakenly transgressed any prohibition for which intentional transgression incurs the penalty of *kares*. [A willful transgression is not atonable by means of a *chatas*.] It consists of either a female kid or female lamb.

2. שְׁעִיר נָשִׂיא, **He-goat of the King** (4:22-26).

The king who becomes liable for a *chatas* brings a he-goat (kid), instead of the female kid or lamb brought by a commoner. [In other respects, his *chatas* obligation and its offering is identical to the commoner's individual *chatas*.]

3. שְׁעִירַת עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה, **She-goat for Idolatry** (Numbers 15:27-31).

When a person unintentionally transgresses the prohibition of idolatry, he must bring a female-goat (kid) to atone [rather than having a choice of bringing a female-lamb, as with the individual's *standard chatas*].

4. קרבן עולה ויורד, **Variable Chatas** (5:1-13).

There are three transgressions requiring a *chatas* for which the Torah provides a less expensive alternative for someone who is poor. These are:

- (a) טמאת מקדש וקדשיו, *tumah violations of the Temple and its sacred things*.

One is forbidden to enter the Temple or eat of the sacrificial foods while in a state of *tumah*. The penalty for doing so intentionally is *kares*; one who does so unwittingly is liable to a *chatas*.^[1]

- (b) שבועת העדות, *oath of testimony*.

This is an oath which comes about when a litigant in a civil case demands of someone that he testify on his behalf. If the witness swears falsely that he does not know any relevant testimony, he is liable to this category of *chatas*.

- (c) שבועת בטוי, *oath of utterance*.

This is an oath by which one takes upon himself to do something, or to refrain from doing something. If he then fails to keep his oath, he is liable to this *chatas*. This category of oath extends to past events as well. Thus, if he swore that he had or had not done something, and it turns out that his oath was false, he is also subject to this *chatas*.

To atone for any of these sins, a person must offer the regular קטאת יחיד, *individual's chatas*. However, in a departure from the regular rules of *chatas*, the Torah provides in these three cases that a poor person may replace the standard kid or lamb with a pair of birds (one as a *chatas* and the other as an *olah*). Should the sinner be completely destitute, he may substitute a meal-offering (the מנחת חוטא, *sinner's minchah offering*; see below). Thus, the type of offering brought varies (literally עולה ויורד, *goes up and down*) according to the financial means of the sinner.^[2]

1. The variable *chatas* is brought for this transgression when the transgressor sinned either because he forgot the prohibition, or because he forgot that the food he was eating was holy or that the place he was entering was the Temple. When he later becomes aware of his transgression, he atones for it with a variable *chatas*. However, if he was never aware of the prohibition or the holy state of the food or Temple, or if he never realizes his transgression, atonement is achieved by the communal *chatas* offering of Yom Kippur, Rosh Chodesh, and the Festivals, as explained by the Mishnah (*Shevuos* chapter 1).

2. This *chatas* departs from the regular *chatas* in two other ways as well. A regular *chatas* comes only for transgressions subject to the penalty of *kares*, but of the three transgressions in this category, only that of *tumah* is subject to *kares* while the two types of false oaths are not. Secondly, a regular *chatas* is brought to atone only for an unintentional transgression, never a willful one. The *chatas* for the oath of testimony, however, comes for a willful violation, not an inadvertent one (Mishnah, *Shevuos* 4:2).

5. שְׁעִירֵי רֹאשִׁי חֹדֶשִׁים וְשֵׁל מוֹעֲדוֹת, He-goats of Rosh Chodesh and the Festivals (Numbers 28:11-31, ch. 29).

As noted above in the *Olah* section, on each Rosh Chodesh and Festival (Pesach, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succot), the Torah requires that additional communal offerings, known as מוֹסָפִים, *mussafim*, be made beyond the *tamid* offering required for each day. Although the majority of these offerings are *olah* offerings, a he-goat (kid) for a *chatas* is required as part of each *mussaf* offering. [On Pesach and Succot, the *mussaf* offering is brought on each day of the Festival.] These *chatas* offerings are to atone for different aspects of טְמֵאת מִקְדָּשׁ וּבְכָרָשׁוֹ, *tumah violations of the Temple and its sacred things* (Mishnah, *Shevuot* 1:4).

6. חֲטָאת הַבָּקָע עִם שְׁתֵּי הַלֶּחֶם, Chatas that Accompanies the Two Loaves Offering (23:19).

On the festival of Shavuot, a special offering of two loaves of bread is brought. This is accompanied by thirteen offerings, one of which is a he-goat as a *chatas* (as explained above in the section on *Olah*, III-B3).

7. חֲטָאת מְצוֹרָע, Chatas of a Metzora (14:10,19).

Upon being healed, a *metzora* (a person afflicted with one of a variety of skin discolorations for which the Torah decrees *tumah*; see chapter 13) undergoes a purification process which includes three offerings. One of these is a female lamb as a *chatas* (the others being an *olah* and *asham*). In the case of an impoverished *metzora*, the lamb may be replaced by a bird (see section IX on bird offerings, B2b). [This *chatas* is also a partially variable one, inasmuch as a poor man may substitute a bird, though not a *minchah*.] In a departure from the customary rules of *chatas* offerings, the *metzora's chatas* is accompanied by a *minchas nesachim* [libation *minchah* offering]; see below, section XI.

8. חֲטָאת נָזִיר טָהוֹר, Chatas of a Nazir (Numbers 6:14,16).

When a *nazir* (one who has taken upon himself a vow which prohibits him from drinking wine or consuming grape products, cutting his hair, and contaminating himself with the *tumah* of a human corpse) completes the term of his vow, he brings three offerings. One of these is a *chatas* (female lamb) [while the other two are an *olah* and a special *shelamim*; see sections III-B10, VII-C].

The Asham/Guilt Offering

Like the *chatas*, the אָשָׁם, *asham* (guilt-offering) is generally offered to atone for sin and cannot be brought as a donation. It is always a personal offering, never communal, and unlike the *chatas*, it is *always* an outer offering.

Six circumstances require an *asham* — three in which it is offered as an atonement for sin, one in which it serves as temporary atonement for possible sin, and two in which it is brought as part of a general procedure.

A. Sacrificial Procedure

The sacrificial procedure of the *asham* is similar to that of the *olah*, except that the meat of the *asham* is eaten. The owner performs *semichah* and the offering is then slaughtered in the northern sector of the Courtyard, the blood is thrown from the vessel onto the lower half of the Outer Altar at the northeast and southwest corners, in such a manner that it spreads to all four walls [שְׁתֵּים שָׁהוּ אַרְבַּע, *two (applications) that are (in reality) four*]. The *emurin* (sacrificial parts) are salted and burned upon the Altar, and the meat is eaten by male Kohanim for up to a day and a night [i.e., the remainder of that day, until dawn of the following morning].

B. Circumstances Requiring an Asham

1. אָשָׁם גְּזֵלוֹת, *Theft Asham* (5:20-26).

If someone owes money, whether for a loan, theft, an article held in safekeeping, or for any other reason, and falsely swears that he does not owe it, he must bring an *asham* (a ram) to atone for his false oath [in addition to repaying the money he owes plus an extra fifth as a penalty]. This is an exception to the general rule of atonement offerings, in that it atones for a willful violation (i.e., a knowingly false oath).

2. אָשָׁם מַעֲלֵלוֹת, *Me'llah Asham* (5:14-16).

The term *me'llah* refers to the misappropriation and personal use of sacred property (see below, section XV). If one unintentionally used for himself objects that were consecrated to be offerings or which belonged to the Temple treasury, he must bring an *asham* (a ram), as well as make restitution and add a surcharge of one-fifth.

3. אִשָּׁם שֶׁקָּחָה חֲרוּסָה, **Betrothed Maidservant Asham** (19:20-22).

This refers to a woman who is half-slave and half-free^[1] who is betrothed^[2] to an עֶבֶר עֲבָדִי, Hebrew servant.^[3] Should another man commit adultery with her, he is not subject to the standard capital punishment for adultery, but is obligated instead to bring an *asham* (a ram) to atone for his sin.

4. אִשָּׁם נָזִיר טָמֵא, **Asham of a Nazir Tamel** (Numbers 6:9-12).

As explained previously (in the *chatas* and *olah* sections), a *nazir's* vow prohibits him from drinking wine, cutting his hair, and contaminating himself with the *tumah* of a human corpse, for a specified length of time. If he should become *tamei* through contact with a human corpse, he voids his previous observance and must begin observing his term anew. Before beginning, however, he must purify himself, shave the hair of his head at the conclusion of the purification period, and bring offerings on the following day. These offerings are a (male) lamb as an *asham* and two bird offerings.

1. Under Torah law, marriage cannot legally take effect with a non-Jewish slavewoman. Accordingly, cohabitation with a non-Jewish slavewoman, though forbidden, is never subject to the penalty for adultery. Once she is freed, however, she gains the status of a convert and can legally enter into marriage. The situation of this offering arises when a non-Jewish slavewoman is owned by two partners, one of whom freed her, thus leaving her part slave and part free. If she is betrothed by a Jew, only her free half can be considered betrothed, while her slave half is unaffected by the betrothal. This legal condition in which half of her person is betrothed gives her the status of a quasi-betrothed wife; adultery with her does not carry the usual capital punishment, but is subject to an *asham* offering (*Gemara, Kereisos* 11a, *Gittin* 43a).

This interpretation of the שֶׁקָּחָה חֲרוּסָה, *betrothed maidservant* prohibition reflects the opinion of R' Akiva; according to R' Yishmael, it refers to a woman who is completely a slave who has been designated as the consort of a Hebrew servant (*ibid.*).

2. The word *betrothal* does not refer to a simple engagement but to קִדּוּשִׁין, *kiddushin*, a legal state treated in most regards as marriage and subject to the prohibition of adultery. This is the legal condition brought about by giving the ring at the *chupah*.

3. An עֶבֶר עֲבָדִי, *Hebrew servant*, is a Jew who has become a slave. In general, the laws which treat a slave as a person of diminished legal status refer to Canaanite slaves — עֶבֶר עֲבָדִי — שֶׁקָּחָה קָנְעוּתִי — non-Jewish men or women who have become slaves. Jewish slaves are considered only indentured servants, subject to working for a fixed number of years, but not the legal property of the master. The Hebrew servant does not lose his or her status as a full Jew while indentured (see *Exodus* 21:1-11). The major exception to this rule is the law permitting the master to give his Hebrew servant a Canaanite slavewoman as a wife. Thus, the only person who may permissibly marry a woman who is half (Canaanite) slave and half freewoman is a Hebrew slave, since he is permitted to marry her both as slave and as freewoman.

5. אָשָׁם מְצֹרָה, *Metzora's Asham* (14:12).

As explained previously (in the *chatas* and *olah* sections), when a *metzora* is cured, he must undergo a purification process that requires him to bring a group of three offerings, the first of which is a (male) lamb as an *asham*. [The other two required offerings are a *chatas* and *olah*.]

The sacrificial service of this *asham* has certain uncommon features. Along with his *asham*, the *metzora* brings a log of olive oil (see section on Biblical Measures). The first step in offering this *asham* is to take the oil and lamb and wave them together in all four directions and then up and down; this rite is known as *tenufah*, תְּנוּפָה, waving (14:12; Mishnah, *Menachos* 5:6). Since the *metzora* is still *tamei* to some extent,^[1] he cannot enter the Courtyard to perform the *tenufah* along with the Kohen as he would with other offerings requiring *tenufah* (see section VI-A). Consequently, this is done by the Kohen alone.^[2] For the same reason, the *metzora* cannot enter the Courtyard to perform the *semichah* rite. Accordingly, the animal is brought to the entrance of the Courtyard where the *metzora* inserts his hands to perform the *semichah*. The animal is then slaughtered in the northern part of the Courtyard and its blood is received by two Kohanim, one in a vessel and the other in his hand. The blood in the vessel is taken and thrown on the wall of the Altar in the manner appropriate to an *asham* offering, while the Kohen who received the blood in his hand goes back to the entrance of the Courtyard and daubs some of the blood on the right ear, thumb, and big toe of the *metzora*. The Kohen then pours some of the oil into the palm of his hand, dips his finger into it, and daubs oil on the right ear, thumb and toe of the *metzora*. He then sprinkles the oil with his finger seven times towards the entrance of the *Ohel Moed*, and smears the remainder of the oil in his palm onto the *metzora's* head.

In yet another departure from the general rules of the *asham*, the *metzora's asham* is accompanied by a *minchah nesachim* [libation *minchah* offering; see section X]. The *emurin* of the *asham* are salted and burned on the Altar and its meat is eaten by the Kohanim like that of any *asham*; the remainder of the log of oil is also consumed by the Kohanim.

1. Although the *metzora* has by this point been cured of his *tzaraas* affliction and has immersed in a *mikveh*, he still retains a vestige of his former *tumah* until he offers his purification offerings (14:20). A person at this level of *tumah* is referred to as a קֹסֶר כְּפָרִים, one who lacks atonement.

2. This is the view of Rambam as explained by *Kesef Mishneh* (Hil. *Mechuserei Kapparah* 4:2). *Ravad* (ad loc.) disputes this and asserts that the lamb is brought close to the entrance of the Courtyard, where the *metzora* reaches in with his hands, and performs the *tenufah* himself.

6. אָשָׁם תְּלוּי, Asham in Cases of Doubt (5:17,18).

When one is in doubt whether he has committed a transgression rendering him liable to a *chatas* (i.e., he has grounds to suspect that he has transgressed a commandment punishable with *karet* for an intentional transgression, but he is not sure), he must bring a ram as an *asham*. The offering serves to protect him against punishment and atone for the possible transgression for as long as the doubt remains. If and when it is clarified that a transgression has indeed occurred, he must bring the regular *chatas* (*Gemara, Kereisos* 26b).

The Shelamim/Peace Offering

The **שְׁלָמִים**, *shelamim* offerings are not offerings of atonement. Most often the *shelamim* is brought as an individual's voluntary offering, but there are also instances of required personal *shelamim* offerings. There is also one instance of a communal *shelamim* offering.

The outstanding characteristic of the *shelamim* is that the majority of its meat may be eaten by the owner and his guests. For this reason, it is the offering most commonly brought as part of celebrations, such as the Festivals, so that a person and his family may 'celebrate before Hashem' (Deut. 16:14,17).

A. Sacrificial Procedure

The owner of the offering performs *semichah*, and the animal is then slaughtered. In contrast to all the offerings mentioned previously, the personal *shelamim* may be slaughtered anywhere in the Courtyard. [The one exception is the communal *shelamim* brought on the Festival of Shavuot, which must be slaughtered in the Courtyard's northern sector.] The blood of the *shelamim* is thrown onto the lower half of the northeast and southwest corners of the Outer Altar's walls so that it spreads to all four walls (**שְׁתֵּי שַׁחַת אֶרְבָּעַן**, *two (applications) that are (in reality) four*). Its *emurin* (sacrificial fats and organs) are removed along with its **חֵזֶק וְיָרֵךְ**, *breast and right hind thigh*. These are held by the owner and the Kohen together and waved in all four directions and then up and down; this rite is known as **תְּנוּפָה**, *tenufah*, waving (10:15; Mishnah, *Menachos* 5:6). The *emurin* are then salted and burned on the Altar, and the breast and right hind thigh are given to a Kohen to be eaten. Every *shelamim* is accompanied by a *minchas nesachim*.

In contrast to the other offerings listed to this point, the remainder of the *shelamim's* meat belongs to the owner of the offering, not the Kohanim, and it may be eaten by him and his guests even if they are not Kohanim. It may also be eaten throughout the camp (and in Temple times, throughout Jerusalem) for up to two days from the time of its slaughter and the intervening night (in contrast to the previously mentioned offerings, which may be eaten for only a day and a night and only in the Temple Courtyard). The Kohen's portion of the *shelamim* — the breast and right hind thigh — is eaten only by Kohanim and may not be eaten by a non-Kohen; however, it may be eaten throughout the camp and is permitted to all members of a

Kohen's household, male and female, children and slaves (3:1-17, 7:28-38). [Here again the communal *shelamim* is an exception: it is eaten only by male Kohanim, only in the Courtyard, and only for one day and night.]

B. Circumstances Requiring a Shelamim

1. שְׁלָמֵי צִבּוּר, Communal Shelamim, or בְּכָשִׁי עֶצְרָת, Lambs of Shavuot (23:17-19).

On the Festival of Shavuot, two loaves [שְׁתֵּי הַלֶּחֶם] are brought as a communal offering (see below, section X on the *minchah* offerings). In addition to its complement of *olah* and *chatas* offerings (see above), two lambs are brought as *shelamim* offerings; these are known as the בְּכָשִׁי עֶצְרָת, lambs of Shavuot. These two lambs undergo *tenufah*, i.e., they are 'waved' together with the two loaves, after which they are slaughtered in the northern part of the Courtyard. The communal *shelamim* offerings are subject to the same general rules of sacrifice as the *asham* offering (Zevachim 5:5). Thus, their blood is thrown onto the lower part of the northeast and southwest corners of the Outer Altar in two applications that are in reality four [שְׁתֵּי שָׁחַ אַרְבַּע], their *emurin* are salted and burned on the Altar, and their meat is eaten only by male Kohanim and only within the Courtyard, for up to a day and a night. However, before burning the *emurin*, the חֵזֶה וְשׁוֹק, breast and right hind thigh, of each of the two lambs are taken and waved with the two breads in the manner of a *shelamim*. Thus, *tenufah* is performed twice with this offering: once with the two live lambs and the two breads, and once with the חֵזֶה וְשׁוֹק, breast and right hind thigh, and the two breads.¹ The offering of these two lambs permits the two loaves [שְׁתֵּי הַלֶּחֶם] to be eaten by the Kohanim.

2. שְׁלָמֵי יָחִיד, Personal Shelamim (chapter 3).

The most common form of *shelamim* is a voluntary offering of an individual. One may donate any kind of cattle, sheep, or goat, whether male or female, young or mature for a *shelamim*. As noted above, the personal *shelamim* is distinguished from the offerings mentioned to this point in that its meat (with the exception of the breast and thigh portions) belongs to the owner of the offering, not the Kohanim, and may be eaten throughout the camp (and in Temple times throughout Jerusalem) for up to two days from the time of its slaughter and the

1. This is the view of Rambam (Hil. Temidin U'Mussafin 8:11) as explained by Lechem Mishneh there. It is not clear that this view is universally accepted; see the ArtScroll Yad Avraham commentary to Menachos 5:7 for a further discussion of this point.

intervening night. The breast and right hind thigh are waved together with the *emurin* and are then given to the Kohanim to be eaten by them and their households according to the same rules.

3. חגיגה, **Chagigah**;

4. שלמי שמחה, **Shelamim of Rejoicing**

(Exodus 23:14, Deut. 16:14,16,17).

On each of the שלש רגלים, Three Pilgrimage Festivals (i.e., Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot), each male is required to offer a Festival *shelamim* known as a חגיגה (from חג, festival). This offering may be from sheep, goats or cattle, young or mature, male or female, like any regular *shelamim*. In addition, one is expected to offer additional *shelamim*, according to his means and needs, so that the Festival be celebrated in great joy in the presence of Hashem. These are known as שלמי שמחה, *shelamim of rejoicing*. The sacrificial procedure for these offerings is the same as that of the voluntary *shelamim*.

תודה/Thanksgiving Offering and Nazir's Ram

There are two other offerings which are essentially special forms of *shelamim*, but since they differ in certain details, they are generally thought of as separate categories: the תודה, *todah*, thanksgiving offering (7:11-15), and the אֵיל נָזִיר, *nazir's ram* (Numbers 6:14).

A. Circumstances Warranting a Todah

The *todah* is brought to give thanks to *Hashem*. While a person may offer it for any occasion which moves him to give thanks, the Sages delineated four situations which warrant a *todah* offering: recovery from a severe sickness, safe return from a dangerous trip across a desert, a sea voyage, and release from prison. [These are the same four occasions for which a person recites the בְּרַכַּת הַגּוֹמֵל, *blessing of thanksgiving* (Gemara, *Berachos* 54b).] The *todah* may be brought from any cattle, sheep, or goats — young or mature, male or female.

The distinctive feature of the *todah* is that it is accompanied by forty loaves of bread, ten each of four different kinds. These are: חֲלֹט, (*matzah*) loaves; רֻקִּיקִים, *wafers*; רְבוּכָה, *scalded loaves* (loaves whose dough is dropped into boiling water before being baked and then fried); and לֶחֶם חָמֵץ, *leavened bread*. [These will be explained in more detail in the section X, on the *minchah*-offerings.] These loaves are not offered on the Altar, but they are nonetheless a component of the offering.

B. Sacrificial Procedure

The owner begins by performing *semichah*. Like the *shelamim*, the *todah* may be slaughtered anywhere in the Courtyard, and its blood is thrown against the lower half of the Outer Altar's walls, at the northeastern and southwestern corners, in two applications that are in reality four [שְׁתֵּים שָׁנֹן אֲרָבַע]. The slaughter of the *todah* also serves to sanctify the accompanying breads, and the application of the *todah's* blood to the Altar permits consumption of the breads. The *emurin* of the *todah*

are removed and are taken together with the *חֵזֶה וְשׁוֹק*, breast and thigh portions, of the animal for *tenufah* (waving), as with any *shelamim*. In addition, one loaf of each kind is taken to be waved together with the breast and thigh (*Rambam, Maaseh HaKorbanos* 9:7). The *emurin* are then salted and burned on the Altar, and all the other waved items are given to the Kohanim to eat. The remainder of the meat and bread is eaten by the owner (and his guests). The meat and bread may be eaten throughout the camp (in Temple times throughout Jerusalem) by any person. The portion of the Kohanim may be eaten only by Kohanim and members of their households. However, in contrast to the standard *shelamim*, which can be eaten for up to two days, the *todah* can be eaten for only a single day and night (7:11-27).

C. Nazir's Ram

When a *nazir* concludes his vow, he must offer a ram as a *shelamim* (in addition to his *chatas* and *olah*; see above). This ram is known as the *אֵיל נָזִיר*, *nazir's ram*. The sacrificial procedure of this offering is the same as that of the *shelamim* and *todah*. Like the *todah*, this offering is accompanied by baked loaves (*Numbers* 6:15), but of only two varieties: *חֲלֹת*, *matzah loaves* and *רִקְיָקִים*, *wafers*. There are ten loaves of each. As with any *shelamim*, the *emurin* are removed along with the breast and right hind thigh of the offering *חֵזֶה וְשׁוֹק*, for the ritual of *tenufah*. As with the *todah*, one of each variety of bread is added to the *tenufah* selection. However, in a procedure unique to the *nazir's* ram offering, the entire ram is cooked, and its right foreleg is also included in the *tenufah* ritual (*Numbers* 6:19,20). Thus, the items waved in the *tenufah* of the *nazir's* ram are its *emurin*, breast, right hind thigh, right foreleg, and one loaf of each of the two kinds of bread that accompany the offering.

After the *tenufah*, the *emurin* are salted and burned on the Altar, and the other waved items are given to the Kohen to eat (together with his household). The remaining eighteen loaves and the meat of the ram belong to the *nazir* and may be eaten by anyone throughout the camp (later, throughout Jerusalem). Like the *todah*, the *nazir's* ram is eaten for only a single day and night (in contrast to the regular *shelamim*).

The Bechor/Firstborn, Maaser/Tithe and Pesach/Passover Offerings

The last three categories of animal offerings have very similar rules. They are the **בְּכוֹר**, *firstborn offering*, the **מַעֲשֵׂר**, *tithe offering*, and **קָרְבַּן פֶּסַח**, *pesach offering*.

A. Bechor

If the first offspring of a cow, sheep, or goat, is a male, it is automatically sanctified as an offering. This offspring is known as a **בְּכוֹר**, *bechor* [firstborn]. It acquires sanctity at birth and must be given to a Kohen, who in turn brings it as an offering.

❖ **Sacrificial Procedure:** Unlike the great majority of offerings mentioned to this point, the *bechor* does not require *semichah*. It may be slaughtered anywhere in the Courtyard and its blood only requires one application which may be made on any part of the lower half of the Altar wall that is above the **יָסוֹד**, *base*.⁽¹⁾ The blood is not thrown, but poured [שָׁפָךְ] onto the the Altar's wall. Its *emurin* are salted and burned on the Altar, and its meat may be eaten throughout the camp⁽²⁾ (later, throughout Jerusalem) for up to two days and the intervening night, but only by Kohanim and their households (*Numbers* 18:17,18).

B. Maaser

Each year, a person must tithe all the newborn offspring of his cattle, sheep, and goats. Each tenth animal automatically becomes consecrated as a **מַעֲשֵׂר**, *maaser* [tithe] offering. It belongs to the owner who must take it to Jerusalem and offer it in the Temple (27:32).

1. The base of the Altar was a section one cubit wide which protruded from the bottom of the Altar. In the Second Temple the base did not extend completely around the entire Altar, but only along the northern and western walls and a fraction of the eastern and southern sides.

2. The *Gemara* in *Bechoros* 4b records a dispute between R' Yochanan and Reish Lakish whether the law of the *bechor* offering was in effect during the Wilderness years. According to one view, it did not take effect until the Israelites entered the Land.

❖ **Sacrificial Procedures:** The sacrificial procedure of the *maaser* offering is identical to that of the *bechor*. *Semichah* is not performed on the *maaser* offering. It may be slaughtered anywhere in the Courtyard, and its blood is applied once to the lower part of the Altar wall at any point above the יסוד, *base*. The blood is also not thrown but poured [שפירה] onto the Altar's wall. Its *emurin* are salted and burned on the Altar, and its meat may be eaten throughout the camp (later, throughout Jerusalem) for up to two days and the intervening night, by the owner and his guests.

C. Pesach

The Torah commands that the Exodus from Egypt be commemorated each year on the festival of Pesach with a *pesach* offering [along with the more familiar *matzah* and *maror*]. The *pesach*-offering is a lamb or kid which is sacrificed on the fourteenth of Nissan and eaten that night, together with the *matzah* and *maror*, as part of the *Seder* (*Exodus* chapter 12). [Since the *pesach* was only offered once in the Wilderness, in the first year after the Exodus, the sacrificial procedure will be described as it was performed during Temple times. The procedure for the Wilderness was essentially the same, with the 'camp' substituting for Jerusalem.]

❖ **Sacrificial Procedures:** A number of people may join together before Pesach to offer one lamb or kid, but they must clearly identify in advance which group they are joining. These people are then known as the מְנַיִים, *registered eaters*, of the offering. *Semichah* is not performed on the *pesach*. It is slaughtered on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nissan, its blood is poured (not thrown) once on the lower part of the Altar wall at any point above the יסוד, *base* (see *Zevachim* 37a),^[1] and its *emurin* are removed, salted, and burned on the Altar. Each group then takes its *pesach* to its holiday residence in Jerusalem and roasts it (the only way in which a *pesach* may be prepared). It is eaten that night together with *matzah* and *maror* as part of the *Seder* by every man and woman who has properly registered, and it must be finished by midnight.

1. See *Rambam Maaseh HaKorbanos* 5:17 and *Rashi* to *Pesachim* 89a s.v. פסח בשפירה. From *Tosafos, Pesachim* 121a s.v. כשתמצא it seems that the blood is poured directly onto the base of the Altar.

The Bird Offerings

In addition to animal offerings, the Torah also provides for bird offerings. Often, the bird offering serves as a substitute for an animal offering; however, there are a number of instances in which the bird is the only possible offering.

Only two varieties of birds may be offered upon the Altar — תרורים, *turtledoves*, and בְּנֵי יוֹנָה, *young pigeons*. There are also only two types of bird offerings — *olah* (1:14-17) and *chatas* (5:7-10). In most instances, the *olah* and *chatas* are offered as a pair, in which case both birds must be of the same variety.

As noted above in section I-D2, the sacrificial procedure of bird offerings is similar overall to that of animal offerings, but differs in several crucial details. The most outstanding of these is that the bird offering is not slaughtered through *shechitah*, but with the unique procedure reserved for bird offerings known as מְלִיקָה, *melikah*, [nipping]; this has been explained in the earlier section. Other important differences are that *semichah* is never performed on a bird offering and that its blood is not caught in a vessel, but is applied to the Altar directly from its neck. The remaining differences will become evident from the description of the *avodah* (sacrificial procedure) of each type of offering.

A. עֹלַת הָעוֹף, Bird Olah

(1:14-17)

1. Sacrificial Procedure

The bird is brought to the top of the Altar, to either its southeast or southwest corner, and slaughtered there through *melikah*. The Kohen^[1] cuts with his right thumbnail through the back of the bird's neck towards the front through both the windpipe and the esophagus.^[2] The cutting of both סִימָנִים, "pipes," is essential to the validity of the bird *olah* (Mishnah, *Zevachim* 6:4,6). The bird's blood is then applied to the *upper* part of the

1. This contrasts with the animal offering in which the slaughter need not be performed by a Kohen.

2. According to *Rambam* (see *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 6:20, 7:6, with *Kesef Mishneh*), the Kohen must completely sever the bird's head; according to *Rashi* (*Chullin* 21a), he need not actually sever it.

Altar wall by pressing the neck and severed head against the wall; this procedure is known as *מְצוּי* (1:15). The Kohen removes the crop (the pouch of the neck where food is stored) with the feathers that are attached to it, pulling out the entrails as well. He throws these from the top of the Altar to the 'place of the ashes,' located just to the south of the Altar (verse 16). He then splits open the body of the bird along its spine, salts the bird, and tosses the entire bird onto the Altar fire (verse 17).

2. Circumstances Warranting a Bird Olah

Like its animal counterpart, the bird *olah* is brought both as an obligatory and voluntary offering. The following are the situations in which a bird *olah* is brought; in most of these instances together with a bird *chatas*. Unlike the animal *olah*, the bird *olah* does not have *semichah*, may be either male or female, and is not accompanied by a *minchas nesachim*.

(a) נִדְבָה, Voluntary Offering (1:14-17).

Like its animal counterpart, the bird *olah* may be brought as a voluntary offering.

(b) קָרְבַּן עוֹלָה וְיֹרֵר, Variable Chatas Offering (5:7-10).

In the section on *chatas* offerings (IV-B4) we listed the category of קָרְבַּן עוֹלָה וְיֹרֵר, *variable chatas*, and explained that three transgressions require a *chatas* for which a poor person may use a less expensive bird offering instead of a kid or lamb. This type of bird *chatas* is always accompanied by a bird *olah*, notwithstanding the fact that the animal offering calls only for a *chatas* and not an *olah*.

(c) יוֹלֶדֶת, Woman after Childbirth (12:8).

If a woman who has given birth is too poor to afford the animal *olah* required of her (see section III-B8), she may substitute a bird.

(d) מְצוֹרֶעַ, Metzora (14:21-32).

A *metzora* who has been healed of his affliction is required to bring three offerings — an *olah*, *chatas*, and *asham*. If he cannot afford these three animal offerings, he may substitute birds for the *olah* and *chatas* components. [These offerings are not classified as a קָרְבַּן עוֹלָה וְיֹרֵר, *variable chatas*, apparently because there is no provision for substituting the even less costly meal-offering for someone who cannot afford birds, as there is in the case of the *variable chatas*.]

(e) זָב, Zav (15:14,15).

A *zav* is a man who experiences three seminal emissions differing slightly from ordinary seminal emissions in color, texture, and the manner of experience (see commentary to 15:2 for details). If he experiences these emissions either all on the same day, or on two or three

consecutive days, he is a *zav* and is rendered *tamei*. His purification process includes both a bird *olah* and bird *chatas*. Birds are the prescribed offering for a *zav* even if he is not poor.

(f) זָבַח, *Zavah* (15:29,30).

A *zavah* is a woman who experiences an extra menstrual flow after the time of her regular period. If she experiences such a flow anytime from the eighth through the eighteenth days of her cycle, she becomes *tamei* (see commentary to 15:29). If the flow occurs on three consecutive days during this time, she becomes a זָבַח גְּדוּלָה, *major zavah*, and is required, upon her purification, to offer two birds, one as an *olah* and one as a *chatas*. Here too, birds are the required offering even for one who is not poor.

(g) נָזִיר טָמֵא, *Nazir Tamei* (Numbers 6:10,11).

A *nazir* is a person who has taken a vow that bars him from drinking wine, cutting his hair, and contaminating himself with the *tumah* of the human corpse. If he becomes *tamei*, he is required to undergo a purification process and begin his term anew (see section V-B4). As part of this process, he is required to bring three purification offerings — a lamb for an *asham*, and two birds, one as an *olah* and one as a *chatas*. The *olah* and *chatas* are birds offerings even if he is not poor.

B. חֲטָאת הָעוֹף, Bird Chatas

(5:8,9)

The sacrificial procedure of the bird *chatas* differs from that of the bird *olah* in certain critical ways; offering it in the manner of the *olah* can, in fact, invalidate it (Mishnah, *Zevachim* 7:1). Similarly, offering the bird *olah* according to the *chatas* procedure can invalidate it as well (ibid. 7:2).

1. Sacrificial Procedure

The bird *chatas* is slaughtered near the southwest corner of the Altar by means of *melikah*. It is not, however, an absolute requirement for the Kohen to be standing near the southwest corner; the offering is valid even if it is slaughtered near another part of the Altar, or even elsewhere in the Courtyard (see *Baal HaMaor* to *Kinnim* 1:1). The Kohen punctures the back of the bird's neck with his right thumbnail and cuts to the front until he severs either the esophagus or windpipe, but making sure not to cut both (5:8).¹ The blood of the *chatas* is sprinkled [תָּזָאֵר] directly from the neck of

1. The Torah prohibits separating the head of the bird *chatas* from its body — וְלֹא יִבְרִיל, but not separate it (5:8). Separating is defined as cutting both טִיבְקִימִים, pipes (Rashi), i.e., the

the slaughtered bird onto the lower part of the southwest corner of the Altar and then drained of its remaining blood [מצוי] by pressing the neck of the bird against the wall (*Zevachim* 6:2,4,5). All the meat of the bird is eaten by Kohanim with no part of the bird being burned on the Altar.

2. Circumstances Requiring a Bird Chatas

Like its animal counterpart, the bird *chatas* can be brought only in fulfillment of an obligation. The following is a list of all the situations requiring a bird *chatas*:

(a) קרבן עולה ויזיר, Variable Chatas Offering (5:7-10).

As noted above for the bird *olah*, a person who is obligated to bring a variable *chatas* (see section IV-B4), and who cannot afford the animal offering, brings a pair of bird offerings, one a *chatas* and the other an *olah*.

(b) מקורב, Metzora (14:21-32).

A *metzora* who cannot afford an animal *chatas* as part of his purification procedure (see section IV-B7), may use a bird instead.

(c) וילדת, Woman after Childbirth (12:6,7).

As explained above in the section on the animal *olah* (III-B8), a woman who has given birth must offer two sacrifices — a lamb as an *olah* and a bird as a *chatas*. [If she is poor, she may use a bird for her *olah*, but her *chatas* is a bird in all circumstances.]

.. (d) זב, Zav (15:1-15).

In addition to the bird *olah* which a *zav* must bring during his purification (above, A-2e), he must also offer a bird *chatas*.

(e) זבה, Zavah (15:19-33).

A *zavah*, too, brings a bird *chatas* in addition to her bird *olah* (above, A-2f). In both these cases, birds are offered regardless of the financial standing of the people involved.

(f) נזיר טמא, Nazir Tamei (*Numbers* 6:9-12).

A *nazir* who becomes contaminated through a human corpse is required to purify himself and begin his vow anew. At that time, he is obligated to bring three offerings — an *asham*, *chatas*, and *olah*. The last two are bird offerings (even for one who is not poor), as explained in the section on the bird *olah* (A-2g).

windpipe and esophagus. Doing so invalidates the bird *chatas*. According to *Rambam* (*Maaseh HaKorbanos* 7:6), the offering is not invalidated unless he completely severs the head from the body.

Minchah/Meal Offerings

A *minchah* is an offering whose primary ingredient is flour. To this is generally added olive oil and a substance known as *levonah* [לִבְנוֹנָה], frankincense. This class of offerings forms the subject of chapter 2 and 6:7-16 of *Vayikra*.

Minchah offerings may be communal or personal, obligatory or voluntary. They are generally independent offerings, but the *olah* and *shelamim* offerings are complemented by *minchah* offerings together with *נִסְכִּים*, wine libations, as well (see sub-section 8 below).

Minchah offerings are not subdivided into the categories of *chatas*, *olah*, *asham*, etc. However, they may be divided into two distinct categories: those from which a *kometz* portion is removed and burned on the Altar, and those burned in their entirety on the Altar. As noted in the first section of this summary (I-D3), most *minchah* offerings are not burned in their entirety; rather, a small part of their flour and oil is removed by the Kohen and burned on the Altar to validate the *minchah*, and this permits the Kohanim to consume the remainder. The procedure by which this portion is removed is known as *kemitzah*, קְמִיצָה, and the portion removed is called the *kometz*, קֶמֶץ. A *kometz* is the amount that fills the space formed when the middle three fingers of the right hand are folded over the palm (see section D below). In addition, those *minchah* offerings which are sprinkled with *levonah* (frankincense) must have their *levonah* burned on the Altar in order to validate the *minchah* and permit the consumption of its remainder.

In the case of *minchah* offerings which are completely burned on the Altar, no *kemitzah* is performed. These offerings are sanctified in a *בְּלִי שֶׁרָח*, *sacred vessel* (see below), and taken directly to the Altar and burned without any other formal *avodah*. There is also another class of *minchah*-type offerings of which no part of the flour product is burned on the Altar. These, however, are not full-fledged *minchah* offerings; they will be discussed separately at the end of this section.

Another unique feature of the *minchah* offering is that, unlike the animal offering, it requires an entire set of preliminary procedures to prepare it for its actual offering. This is because the *minchah* offering comes in three different forms: raw flour, fried cakes, and baked loaves. Even in its raw form, the *minchah's* oil must be mixed with its flour according to a specified procedure. Therefore, regardless of its type, a *minchah* must undergo preparatory procedures to ready it for offering. These procedures vary from *minchah*

offering to *minchah* offering, as will be described below.

A. Circumstances Warranting a Minchah Offering

1. מִנְחַת נֶרְכָה, **Voluntary Minchah** (2:1-13).

The voluntary *minchah* is freely donated by anyone. The Torah lists five types of voluntary *minchah* offerings:

(a) מִנְחַת סֹלֶת [*minchas soless*], fine flour *minchah*.

This *minchah* is offered in its raw state (2:1-3).

(b,c) מִנְחַת מֵאָמָה תָנוּר, oven-baked *minchah*.

This *minchah* is baked directly in an oven, and it comes in two varieties: חָלָלוֹת, *challos*, unleavened loaves baked with oil; and רִקְקִיִּים, *rekikim*, wafers baked without oil, upon which oil is later smeared (2:4).

(d) מִנְחַת מַחְבָּט [minchas machavas], griddle *minchah*.

This *minchah* is fried on a griddle before being offered (2:5-6).

(e) מִנְחַת מַרְחֶשֶׁת [minchas marcheshes], pan *minchah*.

This is offered after having been fried in a pan (2:7-9). These terms will be explained in greater detail in the section describing the preparation of a *minchah*.

The owner generally designates at the time of his pledge which of these five types of *minchah* offerings he will offer. Should he simply pledge a *minchah* without specifying which type, he is later free to designate whichever of these five types of *minchah* offerings he prefers.^[1]

In general, these voluntary *minchah* offerings require *kemitzah*, and their remainders are eaten by the Kohanim once the *kometz* has been burned on the Altar. However, if any of these should be donated by a Kohen, the offering is burned in its entirety, as is the rule for any *minchah* offering brought by a Kohen (6:16); see below.

A voluntary *minchah* must contain a minimum of one *issaron* of flour, but it may also be enlarged to as much as sixty *issaron*, as long as it is in units of a full *issaron*. For every *issaron* added, an additional *log* of oil must also be added. [See the table of Biblical measures at the end of this summary.] Every *kometz* is salted before being placed on the Altar.

1. This is actually the subject of a dispute in the Mishnah (*Menachos* 13:1, 104b), and the view cited above is that of the anonymous *Tanna* of that mishnah, whose opinion is accepted as *halachah* (*Rambam*, *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 17:5). However, *Rashi* in his commentary to *Chumash* explains the verse (2:1) according to the minority opinion of R' Yehudah, that one who does not specify at the time of his vow what type of *minchah* he intends must bring a סֹלֶת מִנְחָה, fine flour *minchah*.

2. מִנְחַת חוֹטָא, **Sinner's Minchah** (5:11-13).

The sinner's *minchah* is the least expensive choice of the קָרְבָּן עוֹלָה וְיוֹרֵד, *variable chatas*. As explained in section IV-B4, three transgressions are subject to a *chatas* offering for which the Torah provides for less expensive alternative offerings for poor people. The first level of substitution is a bird offering. A sinner too poor to afford a bird brings a *minchah*. It contains no oil or *levonah*. A *kometz* is removed, salted, and burned on the Altar, and the remainder is then eaten by the Kohanim.

3. מִנְחַת כֹּהֵן, **Kohen's Minchah** (6:16).

This is not actually a different type of offering but a different version of the offerings listed above. Whereas the previously listed *minchah* offerings require *kemitzah*, any *minchah* offered by a Kohen is burned in its entirety, whether it is one of the five voluntary *minchah* offerings, or an obligatory *minchah*.

4. מִנְחַת כֹּהֵן מְשִׁיחַ, **Anointed Kohen's Minchah** (6:12-15).

This is also known as the חֲבִיתֵי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל, *chavitin of the Kohen Gadol*. The Kohen Gadol (High Priest) is required to bring a special *minchah* offering each day, which is offered half in the morning and half in the afternoon. Twelve loaves are prepared from one *issaron* of flour and three *logs* of oil. The dough is dropped into scalding water, then baked briefly, and then fried in a pan.^[1] Six of the loaves are offered in the morning, and the other six in the afternoon.^[2]

5. מִנְחַת חִינוּךְ, **Induction Minchah**

This is a *minchah* brought by every Kohen on the day he is initiated into the Temple service. Its procedure is identical to that of the *chavitin* (6:13), except that it is not offered in halves, but all at once.

6. מִנְחַת קְנָאוֹת, **Jealousy Minchah** (Numbers 5:15,25-26).

This is the *minchah* brought by a *sotah* (suspected adulteress) as part of the investigation to determine whether she is indeed guilty of adultery. It is made of barley flour and contains no oil or *levonah*.

1. This is the description given by *Rashi* to the verse. The *Gemara* (*Menachos* 50b) records a dispute whether it was baked and then fried, fried and then baked, or baked, fried, and baked again (see *Rashi* there). *Rambam* (*Maaseh HaKorbanos* 13:3) rules that it was just baked and then fried. See his commentators *ad loc.*, and *Rashi* to *Menachos* 50b, s.v. תאפינה רבה, for other views.

2. This is the view of *Ravad*. According to *Rambam* (*Hil. Maaseh HaKorbanos* 13:4), the twelve loaves were each divided in two, and twelve of the half-loaves were offered at each time (see *Lechem Mishneh* and *Mishneh LaMelech* *ad loc.*).

7. מִנְחַת הָעוֹמֶר, *Minchah of the Omer* (2:14-16).

A communal *minchah* offering is made on the sixteenth day of Nissan. Its function is to permit the consumption of the year's new crop of grain [חֵקֵשׁ]. The *minchah* of the *omer* contains oil and *levonah*, but in contrast to the great majority of *minchah* offerings, it is made of barley flour rather than wheat flour. The *minchah* undergoes *kemitzah*, the *kometz* is burned on the Altar, and the remainder is eaten by the Kohanim.

8. מִנְחַת נְסָחִים, [*Minchas Nesachim*], *Minchah of Libations*.

The Torah requires every animal *olah* and *shelamim* offering to be accompanied by a *minchah*, whether it is a voluntary or obligatory offering, or a personal or communal offering (such as the *mussaf*-offerings brought on the Sabbath and Festivals).^[1] The size of the *minchah* varies according to the animal being offered — three *issaron* of flour and six *logs* of oil for a bull, two *issaron* and four *logs* for a ram, and one *issaron* with three *logs* of oil for a lamb. It is also accompanied by a libation [*nesech*] of wine; the amount of wine per animal equals the amount of oil. [It is for this reason that the *minchah* is known as the *minchas nesachim*.] In addition to the *olah* and *shelamim* offerings, the *chatas* and *asham* offerings of the *metzora* also require *nesachim* (14:10,20; *Numbers* 15:1ff).

The offering procedure of a *minchas nesachim* differs from that of other *minchah* offerings in some details. The *minchas nesachim* does not require *kemitzah*; it is completely burned upon the Altar even if it is not a Kohen's *minchah*; *levonah* is not offered with it; it is not waved; nor is it brought near to the southwest corner of the Altar (see section C below).

B. The Minchah's Ingredients

The majority of *minchah*-offerings contain three ingredients: flour, oil, and *levonah* (frankincense).

1. Flour

A *minchah* must contain at least one עֶשְׂרֵין, *issaron* (tenth of an *ephah*) of high grade wheat flour. An *issaron* is equal to 43.2 egg volumes [roughly, three to five pounds of flour, depending on the various opinions for converting Biblical measures into contemporary ones; see the table at the end of this summary]. The wheat used for this flour is refined until only the

1. The *Gemara* (*Zevachim* 111a, *Kiddushin* 37a,b) cites a dispute whether the obligation to offer the *minchas nesachim* was in effect during the Wilderness years or whether it first took effect upon the entry into the Land of Israel. *Rashi* (ibid.), however, explains that the dispute relates only to personal offerings, but communal offerings were certainly accompanied by *nesachim*. This may be seen from the requirement of *nesachim* for the *miluin* offerings and the daily *tamid* offering (see *Tosafos* loc. cit.).

finest part of the kernel remains, and this is then ground to make flour for the *minchah*. This type of flour is known as סֹלֶת [*soless*], *fine flour* (see verse 2:1). Two *minchah* offerings are made of barley flour: the מִנְחַת הָעֹמֶר, *minchah of the omer*, and the מִנְחַת קְנָאוֹת, *jealousy minchah of the sotah*.

Some *minchah* offerings, such as the מִנְחַת נְסָחִים, *minchas nesachim*, contain two or three *issaron* of flour (*Numbers* 15:4-9), and a voluntary *minchah* may contain multiples of up to sixty *issaron* (*Mishnah, Menachos* 12:4). [It cannot, however, contain fractions of *issarons*, only whole units.]

2. Oil

A *minchah* generally contains one *log* of olive oil (the volume, of six eggs, or between 12 and 21 fluid ounces; see table at the end of the summary) while a *minchas nesachim* contains either two or three *logs* of oil per *issaron* of flour, depending on the type of offering (see *Numbers* 15:4-9). The amount of oil added to a voluntary *minchah* containing more than one *issaron* is one *log* per *issaron*.

Not all *minchah* offerings require oil. The exceptions are the מִנְחַת חוֹטָא, *sinner's minchah*, and the מִנְחַת קְנָאוֹת, *jealousy minchah of a sotah*.

3. Levonah

Most *minchah* offerings also contain a measure of לִבְנוֹהָ [*levonah*], *frankincense*.⁽¹⁾ This is not mixed into the *minchah* (it is inedible), but placed on top of it. The required amount of *levonah* is a *kometz* — the amount that fits into the space formed when the middle three fingers of the hand when they are folded over the palm. [This measure is elaborated upon below in greater detail in connection with the removal of flour from the *minchah* for burning on the Altar.] Here too, the מִנְחַת חוֹטָא, *sinner's minchah*, and the מִנְחַת קְנָאוֹת, *jealousy minchah*, are exceptions and do not require *levonah*.

C. The Preliminary Steps

Before a *minchah* can be offered, its ingredients must be mixed and prepared, and it must undergo certain rites preliminary to its *avodah*.

The different types of *minchah* offerings are prepared in different ways.

1. The Scriptural term לִבְנוֹהָ, *levonah*, generally translated as frankincense, is a resinous substance derived from the sap of certain trees. It hardens into granules which are used as incense. Whether the trees identified as the sources of frankincense are indeed identical to the ones from which *levonah* was taken is difficult to determine. However, *Aruch HaShulchan HaAsid* 19:8 cites from *Shelah* that *levonah* comes from the sap of a tree. See also *Tiferes Yisrael* in his introduction to *Seder Kodashim* 2:67.

However, the steps by which the oil and flour are mixed is the same for most *minchah* offerings.

1. Consecration and Measurement

One begins the process by verbally consecrating the ingredients to be used and measuring out the required amount of flour and olive oil. There were official vessels in the Temple for measuring the flour and the oil precisely — too much or too little disqualifies the offering (Mishnah, *Menachos* 1:3, 3:5, 9:1,2).

2. Mixing the oil and flour

(א) מִתֵּן שָׁמֶן בְּכֵלִי. A small amount of oil is poured into an empty vessel^[1] and the flour is then added.

(ב) בָּלִילָה. Additional oil is poured on top of the flour, and the flour and oil are then mixed together; this second application of oil, together with the mixing, is referred to as בָּלִילָה, *mixing* (2:4,5). The mixture is then placed in a כֵּלִי שֶׁרֶת, sacred Temple vessel.^[2]

3. Preparing the Minchah

At this point the procedure for the מִנְחַת טָלָה, *fine flour minchah*, and that of the fried and baked *minchah* offerings diverges.

(א) מִנְחַת טָלָה, *fine flour minchah*

- - The fine flour *minchah* (that is, the *minchah* offered in its unbaked flour state) now receives its third application of oil, which is known as רִצִּיקָה, *pouring* (2:1). All the remaining oil is poured on top of the flour, and it is now ready for the addition of the *levonah* (see below).

(ב) מַחֲבָבָה, *machavas*; and מַרְחֶשֶׁת, *marcheshes*

After the flour has received its second application of oil and been mixed with it in the manner described above, it is kneaded with lukewarm water,^[3] but caution must be exercised that the dough not become *chametz* [leavened] (2:11). The *minchah* is then fried over a

1. This follows the opinion of Rashi. According to Rambam (*Maaseh HaKorbanos* 13:8; see *Lechem Mishneh* to #5), this step is omitted for the oven-baked *challot* and *rekikim* (see below), all their oil is added in the בָּלִילָה stage.

2. This follows the opinion of Rambam (*Maaseh HaKorbanos* 13:5). Others are of the opinion that the oil and flour are initially placed and mixed in a כֵּלִי שֶׁרֶת, sacred vessel (*Tosafos* to *Menachos* 9a, s.v. רִצִּיקָה לֵקֶשׁ; see *Kesef Mishneh*).

3. This follows the view of Rambam (*Maaseh HaKorbanos* 13:6). However, Rashi (*Menachos* 74b, s.v. קָדֵם לַעֲשִׂיתוֹ) states that it was kneaded with water *before* the second application of oil. The oil is then added to the dough and mixed with it.

fire^[1] in either a *machavas* or a *marcheshes*. The *machavas* is a flat griddle which allows most of the oil to burn off, thereby creating a somewhat harder product. The *marcheshes* is a deeper pan which retains more of the oil, and whose product is therefore softer (Mishnah, *Menachos* 5:8).

The fried cakes are then broken into pieces; this process is known as *פתיחה* (2:6). The pieces are placed in a sacred vessel, and the rest of the *minchah's* oil is then poured onto the pieces, in fulfillment of the requirement of *קציקה*, *pouring* (2:6).

(c) *מִנְחַת תֵּנּוּר*, Oven-Baked Minchah

The *minchah* offerings that are baked in an oven come in two forms: *חלות*, *loaves*, and *רְקִיקִים*, *wafers*. Unlike the earlier *minchah* offerings, these do not have a third application of oil. For the *חלות*, *loaves*, all the remaining oil is added at the time of the *בְּלִילָה*, *mixing*, prior to the baking. The *רְקִיקִים*, *wafers*, are baked only with water (and the small amount of oil added to the vessel prior to the addition of the flour),^[2] and their oil is smeared on the wafers after they have been baked. This is called *מְשִׁיחָה*, *smearing*, and it replaces the *בְּלִילָה*, *mixing* procedure (2:4). These loaves and wafers, too, are broken into pieces [*פתיחה*].

(d) Obligatory Minchah

The obligatory *minchah* offerings are offered in their unbaked state. Thus, their procedure conforms to that of the *מִנְחַת סֶלֶת*, *fine flour minchah*. The exception to this is the *מִנְחַת חוֹטָא*, *sinner's minchah*, and the *מִנְחַת קְנָאוּת*, *jealousy minchah*, which are offered without oil. Another exception is the *chavitin* of the Kohen Gadol, which is dropped into boiling water after being mixed with oil, then kneaded and baked slightly, after which it is fried on a griddle.

4. Addition of Levonah

Once the flour has been properly mixed with its oil and baked or fried, a *kometz* of *levonah* is placed on top of the *minchah*. The exceptions to this are the *minchas nesachim*, which contains oil but not *levonah* (*Numbers* ch. 15; Mishnah, *Menachos* 5:3), and the *מִנְחַת חוֹטָא*, *sinner's minchah* (5:11) and the *מִנְחַת קְנָאוּת*, *jealousy minchah* of a *sotah* (*Numbers* 5:15), which contain neither oil nor *levonah*.



1. See *Rashi's*, commentary to v. 2:5. See ArtScroll *Menachos*, comm. to the end of mishnah 5:8.

2. This is the view of *Rashi* and *Tosafos* in *Menachos*. However, according to *Rambam* (*Maaseh HaKorbanos* 13:8), in the case of oven-baked *minchah* offerings, no oil is added to the vessel prior to the flour; rather, all the oil is added in the mixing or the smearing respectively.

The preparation of the *minchah* thus far does not require the involvement of a Kohen. The *minchah* mixture is now brought to the Kohen who performs the following preliminary rites.

5. תנופה, **Waving**

The only two *minchah* offerings which require waving are the *מנחת העומר*, *minchah* of the *omer* (23:11) and the *מנחת קנאות*, *jealousy minchah* of the *sotah* (Numbers 5:25). The Kohen takes the *minchah* (in the latter case, the *sotah* also takes hold of it) and waves it to and fro, in four directions and up and down. The *שתי הלחם*, two loaves (see below) which accompany the communal *shelamim* lambs also require waving (23:20).

6. הנגשה, **Bringing Near to the Altar**

This procedure is performed for all *minchah* offerings except for the *minchas nesachim* (Mishnah, *Menachos* 5:5,6). The Kohen carries the vessel containing the *minchah* over to the Outer Altar and touches the vessel to the southwest corner of the Altar (6:7). The *minchah* may then be removed from the immediate vicinity of the Altar.



The *minchah* is now ready for its *avodah* to begin. The *levonah* is pushed to one side of the vessel in order to allow for the removal of the *kometz* of flour without the admixture of any *levonah*.^[1]

D. The Essential Avodah

M*inchah* offerings are of two sorts: those completely burned on the Altar, and those of which only a small part is burned on the Altar. This latter group, constituting the majority of *minchah* offerings, have a four-part *avodah* which is the essence of their service. In its overall structure, the procedure closely corresponds to the four-part blood *avodah* of the animal offering. As has previously been explained (section I-D3), the four essential steps in the *minchah's* offering are: (a) *קמיצה* [*kemitzah*], removing the small portion of flour to be burned on the Altar; (b) *נתינה בקלי שרת*, placing the *kometz* in a *קלי שרת*, sacred vessel; (c) *הולכה*, carrying it to the Altar; (d) *הקטרה*, burning it on the Altar.

The first *avodah* — the act of removal — is referred to as *קמיצה*, *kemitzah*. The Kohen bends the three middle fingers of his right hand over his palm to form a cavity and fills this cavity by pushing his hand through the flour (or crumbled baked pieces) of the *minchah*, which he then removes from the

1. This assumes that the *levonah* had covered the entire surface of the *minchah*. There was however no requirement that the *levonah* cover the whole surface of the *minchah*.]

minchah.^[1] The portion removed is known as the קֶמֶץ, *kometz*, and what remains is referred to as שְׂרִירִים, *remainder*. Removing the *kometz* from the flour corresponds to the slaughter of the animal in that it separates the essential Altar-part from the main body of the offering (just as the slaughter of the animal makes its blood available for application to the Altar). Placing the *kometz* in the כְּלִי שֶׁרָצָה, *sacred vessel*, corresponds to receiving the animal's blood in a sacred vessel inasmuch as both these acts serve to further sanctify the substance for its special role on the Altar. Carrying the *kometz* to the Altar is equivalent to carrying the blood to the Altar; and burning the *kometz* on the Altar corresponds to applying the blood to the Altar.

As mentioned above, the *levonah* plays an essential role in the *minchah*'s offering. After the *kemitzah* of the flour and the placement of the *kometz* in the sacred vessel, the *levonah* is gathered up from on top of the *minchah* and added to the *kometz*; together, the two are conveyed to the Altar and burned (*Sotah* 14b). Before being placed on the Altar, the *kometz* is salted (as are all offerings).

Once the *kometz* has been burned on the Altar, the remainder of the *minchah* is eaten. The *minchah* may be eaten only by male Kohanim, and only in the Temple Courtyard (6:9).

Three types of *minchah*-offerings are burned in their entirety on the Altar. These are the daily *chavitin* offering of the Kohen Gadol, the *minchas nesachim* which accompanies the *olah* and *shelamim* sacrifices and the *metzora's ashram* and *chatas*, and any *minchah* brought by a Kohen (6:16). No *kemitzah* is done on these offerings; the entire offering is carried directly to the Altar, salted, and placed there for burning.

E. Additional Minchah-type Offerings

The *minchah* offerings discussed to this point are all flour offerings some part or all of which is offered on the Altar. There are also four other baked offerings of which no part actually comes to the Altar.

1. לֶחֶם הַפָּנִים, **Show Bread**

Twelve loaves are baked each week and placed on the *Shulchan*, the golden Table which stands in the קֹדֶשׁ, Holy of the *Ohel Moed* (Tabernacle). These twelve unleavened loaves of bread are accompanied on the *Shulchan* by two spoonfuls [בְּיֹדֵיכִין] of *levonah*. Each Sabbath day the breads and *levonah* are removed and replaced with fresh ones. The outgoing *levonah* is burned on the Altar and the breads are eaten by the Kohanim (23:10).

1. According to *Chafetz Chaim* (Likkutei Halachos, *Toras HaKodashim to Menachos* p.7 #3), the Kohen places his open hand into the flour and closes his middle three fingers over it to form the *kometz*. See comm. to ArtScroll *Menachos* 1:2, s.v. בִּיצֵר הוּא עוֹשֶׂה, for further discussion of this matter.

2. שְׁתֵּי הַלֶּחֶם, **Two Loaves** (23:17-20)

On the Festival of Shavuot, the Torah requires an offering of two loaves of leavened bread. These are accompanied by two communal *shelamim* lambs [כִּבְשֵׁי עֶזְרָה, see section VI-B1], as well as ten *olah* offerings and one *chatas*. This offering serves to permit the year's new crop of grain to be used in Temple offerings. [The *omer* offering brought previously on Pesach only permitted the new grain to be used for *personal* consumption, but not for Temple offerings.] Although no part of these loaves is placed on the Altar [indeed, it is forbidden even to offer anything leavened (*chametz*) on the Altar (2:11)], they become sanctified by the slaughter of the two lambs and thereby subject to all the prohibitions and invalidations that relate to sanctified offerings. The Torah requires the two loaves to be "waved" together with the two lambs [see section C5 for an explanation of תִּנָּקַף, waving], and the loaves are eaten by the Kohanim once the blood *avodah* of the lambs has been completed.

3. לֶחֶם תּוֹדָה, **Todah Breads** (7:11-15)

The Torah requires that a *todah* (thanksgiving offering) be accompanied by forty loaves of bread, in four varieties, consisting of ten loaves each. These are: חֲלוֹת, (*matzah*) loaves (see above, section A1); רִקְקִים, *wafers* (*ibid.*); רְבוּבָה, *scalded loaves* (loaves whose dough is dropped into boiling water before being baked and then fried); and לֶחֶם חֻמֵץ, *leavened bread*. Here, too, no part of the loaves is placed on the Altar; rather they are sanctified by the *todah's* slaughter and become permitted for eating with the application of the *todah's* blood to the Altar. One loaf of each variety is taken and waved together with the *emurin*, and the breast and thigh portions of the *todah*; the *emurin* are then burned on the Altar and the breast, thigh, and four waved breads are given to the Kohen to eat. The remaining loaves are eaten by the owner of the *todah* (and his guests).

4. לֶחֶם אֵיל נָזִיר, **Loaves of the Nazir's Ram** (Numbers 6:13ff)

When a *nazir* concludes his term of abstinence, he must offer three animal sacrifices, one of which is a *shelamim* ram (see section VII-C). This ram is accompanied by two kinds of baked loaves, each consisting of ten loaves: חֲלוֹת, (*matzah*) loaves, and רִקְקִים, *wafers*. Like the *todah* loaves, these become sanctified and permitted for eating by the offering of the *shelamim* ram which they accompany. One loaf of each kind is waved together with the *emurin*, חֶסֶד וְשׁוֹק, (breast and hind thigh), and the זְרִיעַ בְּשֵׁלָה (*cooked foreleg*), of the *nazir's* ram. The *emurin* are burned on the Altar, and the other waved parts, including the two breads, then belong to the Kohen. The remaining nine loaves of each variety are eaten by the *nazir* (and his guests).

Nesachim/Libations, Kettoress/ Incense, and Rare Offerings

א. נְסָכֵי יַיִן, Wine Libations

Wine is a necessary component of the sacrificial service. It may also be donated as a voluntary offering. The offering procedure of wine is unusual. Although it is offered on the Altar, it is not burned but poured onto the Altar and allowed to run off to the ground beneath it.

The designated wine is brought to the Temple and placed in a כְּלִי שֶׁרָתָה, sacred vessel, to be sanctified. It is then taken to the southwest corner of the Altar where two special bowls were attached there to the Altar top, one for receiving the wine and one for the water *nesachim*. The wine is poured into its bowl, which had a tiny hole in it from which the liquid ran out onto the corner of the Altar, and from there (via a pipe) down to the ground at the foot of the Altar. In the *Beis Hamikdash* in Jerusalem, an underground cavity [known as the שִׁיתִּין] was situated next to the southwest corner of the Altar which received the wine (see *Rashi* to *Exodus* 29:40 and *Gemara*, *Succah* 48a,b, with *Rashi* and *Toṣafos* ad loc.).

1. Required Nesachim

Every animal *olah* and *shelamim* offering must be accompanied by נְסָכִים, a libation of wine, which complements the *minchah* known as the *minchas nesachim* (see section X-A8). The *nesachim* are required for both communal and personal offerings. Similarly, the *chatas* and *asham* of the *metzora* must also be accompanied by *nesachim* of wine. The amount of wine varies according to the type of animal used for the offering — half a *hin* (six log) for a bull, cow or calf, a third of a *hin* (four log) for a ram, and a quarter of a *hin* (three log) for a lamb, female sheep of any age, or goat of either gender or age (see *Numbers* 15:1-16; *Rambam*, *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 2:4).

2. Voluntary Nesachim

In addition to the numerous offerings listed to this point, there are still other offerings not explicitly mentioned in the *Chumash*, but known to us through the Oral Law and Biblical exegesis. One of these is the

voluntary *nesachim* offering. A person may donate an offering consisting of just wine [וַיִּין הִבָּא בְּכֵי עֲצָמוֹ] (Mishnah, *Menachos* 12:5); the amount donated must be at least three *log* (ibid. 13:5). The wine is consecrated in a *קְלִי שְׁרָת*, sacred vessel, and poured onto the Altar in the same manner as the required *nesachim*.^[1] Like all offerings, the wine is salted before being poured onto the Altar (Rambam *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 16:14).^[2]

A person may also donate any of the three sizes of *minchas nesachim* (without donating an *olah* or *shelamim*). This offering consists of just the *minchah* (flour and oil) and wine *nesachim* which would normally accompany an *olah* or *shelamim* offering (Gemara, *Zevachim* 84a).

B. נְסוּךְ הַמַּיִם, Water Libation

Another special offering taught by the Oral Law is the *נְסוּךְ הַמַּיִם*. On each of the seven days of Succos a special *nesech* (libation) of water is performed to the accompaniment of great fanfare. The water is sanctified in a *קְלִי שְׁרָת*, sacred vessel, and poured into the second of the two bowls situated at the top of the southwestern corner of the Altar, in the same manner as the wine *nesachim* (see Mishnah, *Succah* ch. 5).

C. קְטוֹרֶת, Incense

1. Daily Incense Offering

The Torah requires that *קְטוֹרֶת*, *incense*, be burned each day on the Inner (Golden) Altar which stands inside the *קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים*, *Holy of Holies*. The incense is a compound of a number of spices prepared in a special manner. The daily portion is divided in two, with one part being burned in the morning and the other in the afternoon. This is a communal offering (*Exodus* 30:7,8,34-38).

2. Incense Offering of Yom Kippur

As part of the special Yom Kippur service, the Kohen Gadol must burn incense inside the *קֹדֶשׁ הַקֳּדָשִׁים*, *Holy of Holies*. He brings with him two handfuls of incense, and a shovelful of burning coals from the Outer Altar into the Holy of Holies, and burns the incense on these coals (16:12,13).

1. In the opinion of Shmuel (*Zevachim* 91b), the voluntary *nesachim* are sprinkled onto the Altar fire rather than poured into the bowl. His view, though, is not the accepted one (see Rambam, *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 16:14).

2. The required *nesachim*, however, are not salted before being poured onto the Altar (Rambam, *Issurei Mizbe'ach* 5:11; see *Kesef Mishneh*, *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 16:14).

D. שמן, Olive Oil

Another offering not explicitly stated in the *Chumash* is the oil offering. A person may donate an offering consisting solely of olive oil [שמן הזבא] [בפני עצמו].¹ He must bring a minimum of one *log* of oil. Like a *minchah*, a *kometz* of the oil is removed from it, salted, and tossed on the Altar fire; the rest is eaten by the Kohanim (*Zevachim* 91b).

E. לבונה, Frankincense

Another offering known to us from the Oral Law is the *levonah* (frankincense) offering. A person may donate an offering of just *levonah* [לבונה הזבא בפני עצמה]. The minimum amount of such an offering is a *kometzful* of *levonah*, all of which is burned on the Altar after it has been salted (*Menachos* 13:3; *Rambam*, *Maaseh HaKorbanos* 16:14).

F. Wood

One can also donate wood for the Altar. In itself this is not an offering, but according to Rabbi [Yehudah HaNasi], one can make an offering of it [קרבן עצים], *wood offering*. A *kometz* of wood is removed, salted and burned on the Altar pyre (*Menachos* 20b). However the halachah is not in accord with this view (*Rambam*, loc. cit., §13).

1. The oil offering is the subject of a dispute in the Mishnah (*Zevachim* 10:8, *Menachos* 12:5). *Rambam* (*Maaseh HaKorbanos* 14:1) rules in favor of the view that such an offering is possible. The minimum amount of such an offering is also disputed (*Menachos* 13:5); *Rambam* (*Maaseh HaKorbanos* 17:15) rules that it is one *log* rather than three.

The Miluim/Inauguration Offerings

A. Miluim Offerings of the Mishkan

When the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was first erected and Aaron and his sons were inducted into the *Kehunah* (priesthood), a special set of offerings was made. These were known as מִלּוּיִם, *miluim* — inauguration offerings. The procedure for these was as follows:

The *Mishkan* was inaugurated on the first of *Nissan*, the year after the Exodus. On each of the seven days before then, a group of extraordinary offerings was brought, whose purpose it was to formalize the installation of Aaron and his sons as *Kohanim*.

The group consisted of three offerings: a *chatas*, an *olah*, and a *shelamim*. [It is the latter which the verse refers to specifically as the מִלּוּיִם, *inauguration offering*.]

(1) The *chatas* (sin offering) was a young bull. Its blood was applied to the Outer Altar, its *emurin* were burned upon it, and the rest of it was burned outside the camp (Ex. 29:1,10-14; Lev. 8:2;1-17). [In this last facet it resembled an 'inner' *chatas* offering, and it (and Aaron's *chatas* on the eighth day) is the only outer offering which was treated so.] Its purpose was to "purify the Altar" and to render it קָדֵשׁ קְדָשִׁים, *most sacred* (Ex. 29:36-37; Lev. 8:15).

(2) The *olah* (elevation offering) was a ram which was offered in the conventional way (Ex. 29:15-18; Lev. 8:18-21).

(3) The last offering in this group was the *shelamim* (peace offering) (Ex. 29:27; Lev. 8:22). Its blood service was similar to that of a regular *shelamim* offering, but it had קָדָשׁ קְדָשִׁים [most-holy] status, and it was therefore eaten exclusively by the *Kohanim*, in the Courtyard of the *Mishkan*, and for only a day and a night (Ex. 29:31-34). In addition to the regular blood applications, its blood was also applied to the right ear, thumb, and big toe of Aaron and each of his sons. The disposition of the offering meat was unique. Its breast and right hind thigh were removed and waved (together with the *emurin*) as with regular *shelamim* offerings, but the thigh was burned (and not given to the *Kohanim* as usual). The breast was given to Moshe to eat (Ex. 29:22,24-26; Lev. 8:29); and the rest went to the *Kohanim*.

This offering was accompanied by three types of breads, each consisting of ten loaves: מַלּוּחַ, (*matzah*) loaves ; רִקְיָקִים, *wafers*; and רְבוּכָה,

scalded loaves (see above, section E3). Like the *todah* and *nazir* offerings, one loaf of each type was waved together with the *emurin* and breast and right hind thigh; however, these waved breads were not eaten by the Kohanim, like ordinary breads, but were burned upon the Altar. The rest of the loaves were eaten by Aaron and his sons for up to a day and a night, in the Courtyard of the *Mishkan* (Ex. 29:22-32; Lev. 8:26-28).

On the eighth day, the day of the inauguration, another complement of offerings was brought. Some were offerings for Aaron and others for the people. Aaron's offerings were: (a) a male calf as a *chatas*; its blood was applied to the Outer Altar, its *emurin* were burned on the Altar, and the remainder was burned outside the camp (9:2,8-11); (b) a ram for an *olah*, offered according to the regular *olah* procedure (9:12-14).

The people's offerings were: (a) a he-goat for a *chatas* offering; (b) a male calf and lamb as an *olah* offering; (c) a bull and ram for a *shelamim* offering (9:2-3, 15-16, 18-21); (d) and a *minchah* offering; its *kometz* was offered upon the Altar and its remainder was eaten by the Kohanim in the Tabernacle Courtyard (9:4,17, 10;12-13).

B. Special Offerings of the Book of Ezekiel

Another complement of offerings whose procedures depart significantly from the norm is listed in *Ezekiel* (45:18-14:11). The *Tanna R' Yose* and the *Amora R' Ashi* explain that these offerings were intended to be brought as *מִלֵּאִים*, *inauguration offerings*, during the inauguration of the Second Temple in the days of Ezra (*Menachos* 45a), and during that of the Temple to be erected in the days of the Messiah (see *Tosafos Chadashim* cited in *Shitah Mekubetzes* loc. cit.; *Rambam, Maaseh HaKorbanos* 2:14). Similarly, *Rambam* (op. cit. 2:15) asserts that the offering brought by the exiles returning from captivity (*Ezra* 8:35-36), some of which deviated from the norm, were inauguration offerings of a sort (cf. *Temurah* 15b).

The Disqualifications

Because of the great sanctity of the Temple service, a number of situations and conditions have the capacity to disqualify an offering.

A. Disqualifications of the Person

To be qualified to perform the *avodah*, one must be an adult male Kohen, free of major body blemishes, and circumcised. One must also be *tahor* (ritually clean); even the slightest degree of *tumah*-contamination disqualifies a person from performing the *avodah*. Also disqualified is an *onein*, a newly bereaved person (on the day of his relative's death; see ch. 10). Before performing the *avodah*, the Kohen must wash his hands and feet in the Temple Courtyard with sanctified water from the *כִּיּוֹר*, *laver*, and don the *בְּגָדֵי כֹהֵן*, *priestly vestments* (8:7-9,13). While he performs the *avodah* he must stand, and his feet must make contact with the Temple floor; and for almost all facets of the *avodah*, he may only use his right hand. The absence of any of these conditions invalidates the offering (see Mishnah, *Zevachim* 2:1).

These disqualifications do not apply to the slaughter of an animal offering; it may be performed even by disqualified persons. However, *melikah* for a bird and *kemitzah* for a *minchah* offering are subject to these disqualifications. A Kohen who has drunk wine, or who has excessively long hair, is also excluded (10:8-11).

B. אֲסוּרֵי מִזְבֵּחַ, Animals Not Permitted as Offerings

Numerous disqualifications prevent an animal from becoming an offering. The most common of these is a blemish; whether temporary or permanent, it disqualifies the animal. In fact, it is forbidden even to consecrate a blemished animal as an offering (22:20-25). After the blemish has healed, however, the animal may be consecrated and offered.

Also disqualified is any animal which has been involved in certain transgressions, such as an animal which has killed a person or has been used in a perverse act (*רִבְעָה וְנִרְבְּעָה*), or has been set aside as an offering to an idol, et al (see Mishnah, *Zevachim* 8:1).

Also disqualified is anything forbidden for ordinary, non-sacred consumption. An example of this is flour made from the new crop [חֶרֶשׁ] before it becomes permissible for consumption with the offering of the *omer*. Similarly, flour made from untithed wheat [טָבֵל], or wine made from grapes that come from a forbidden vineyard [כֶּלְאֵי הַקֶּרֶם], are forbidden for use in an offering. This requirement is based on the verse in *Ezekiel* (45:15) that stipulates that offerings be מִמֶּשְׁקָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, from ingredients permitted to an ordinary Jew.

C.

פְּסוּל מִחֻשָּׁה, **Disqualifications due to Improper Intent**

An offering must be made with the proper intent. Several improper intentions disqualify an offering if they are expressed during any of the four essential *avodos* of an animal offering, or the two of a bird offering, or the corresponding four *avodos* of a *minchah* offering.¹¹

There are four disqualifying intentions, one of which is stated explicitly in the Torah (7:18), and the other three through Biblical exegesis as taught by the Oral Law. These are the intent for:

1. חוץ לְזִמְנוֹ, **Beyond Its Time**

Each offering is subject to a time limit on its consumption, both for its consumption (i.e., burning) on the Altar, and its consumption (i.e., eating) by people. If the Kohen intends during the *avodah* that the offering be consumed beyond the time allowed for it, he invalidates the offering. This invalidation takes effect immediately even though the intention is never fulfilled; the mere intention suffices to invalidate the offering. Consequently, the *avodah* is discontinued, the sacrificial parts are not burned on the Altar, and the meat is not eaten. Furthermore, the meat becomes forbidden under penalty of *kares*. This disqualification is known as פְּגוּל, *piggul*, literally an *abomination* or *rejected*. It is the subject of verse 7:18.

2. חוץ לְמִקְוָמוֹ, **Outside Its Place**

Similar to *piggul* is the disqualification for intending that the offering be consumed — either through eating or burning on the Altar — outside its assigned place, depending on the place assigned for each offering. This intention, too, completely invalidates the offering; however, in

1. Whether the improper intention must be verbally expressed in order to invalidate or only mentally is the subject of a dispute. *Tosafos* (*Zevachim* 4b) and *Rashi* (41b) state that only an oral declaration can invalidate. *Rambam* invalidates even for an undeclared thought (see *Hil. Pesulei HaMukdashin* 13:1 and commentators there).

contrast to the previous *piggul*-invalidation, no *kares* is attached to eating this meat. As in the previous case, the intention invalidates even if it is never fulfilled.

3. שלא לשמה, A Different Designation

An offering may not be intended for any designation but its own. For example if the Kohen performing the *avodah* (sacrificial service) intended a *shelamim* to be an *olah* — the offering is disqualified to the extent that the owner does not fulfill his obligation. The offering itself, however, remains a valid sacrifice; thus, its *avodah* is completed, its sacrificial parts are burned on the Altar, and its meat is eaten. The owner, though, must offer another offering to fulfill his obligation. There are two exceptions — the *chatas* and *pesach* offerings. If these are intended for any designation but their own, they are completely invalidated (*Zevachim* 1:1, *Menachos* 1:1).

4. שלא לשם בעלים, A Different Owner

An offering may not be intended for anyone but its owner. If the Kohen intended the offering to be for someone other than its owner, the owner loses the fulfillment of his obligation, but the sacrifice remains valid, as with the previous disqualification. Here too, the *chatas* and *pesach* offerings are exceptions in that they are totally invalidated.

One who disqualifies an offering through an improper intent transgresses a negative command of the Torah. The phrase which is stated in the context of the *piggul* intent (7:18): לֹא יִחָשֵׁב, literally, *it shall not be credited [to him]*, is interpreted exegetically to mean, *He shall not intend [an improper intent]* (Rambam, *Pesulei HaMukdashin* 18:2).

D. Disqualifications of the Offering Parts

The disqualifications discussed to this point are those which disqualify the offering as a whole, either because of the animal's ineligibility to serve as an offering, or because the offering was offered with improper intentions. It goes without saying that in these cases *all* the components of the sacrifice (blood, sacrificial parts, meat of an animal or bird offering; *kometz* and remainder of a *minchah* offering) are disqualified.

Once an animal has been slaughtered, it is elevated to a higher level of sanctity. Prior to being slaughtered, its sacred status derives from the verbal designation that it be an offering. From *shechitah* onward it is actually an offering, and its new status renders it susceptible to three additional disqualifications. These are: יוֹצֵא, leaving its area; טָמֵא, becoming contaminated with *tumah*; לֵינָה, being left past its time.

Any level of *tumah*, no matter how weak, is sufficient to disqualify these substances; indeed, there are special levels of *tumah* that apply only to offerings. Should the meat become contaminated with *tumah*, it may not be eaten; should the *emurin* be contaminated, they may not be burned on the Altar; and if the blood is contaminated, it may not be applied to the Altar.

3. לִינָה, Past Its Time

If blood, meat, or sacrificial parts are left beyond their prescribed time, they are disqualified. The prescribed time for each component of an offering is different. The blood of an offering must be applied to the Altar before sundown of the day of its slaughter; thus, the blood is disqualified at sundown. The *emurin* may be burned throughout the night that follows, and they therefore do not become disqualified unless they are left past dawn. The time for eating the meat varies according to the offering, and the meat of each type of offering is disqualified and prohibited for eating as soon as its time passes. [Most offerings are eaten only until dawn of the morning following the slaughter. The *shelamim*, *bechor*, and *maaser*, however, may be eaten until sundown of the second day.] Meat that has been left beyond its time is called נֹסֵס, *nossar*, i.e., *leftover*, and its consumption is punishable by *kares* (7:15,16).

It should be emphasized that the disqualification of the meat and sacrificial parts, or even of a part of the blood, does not negate the validity of the offering as a whole. As long as some of the blood has not been disqualified and has been properly applied, the offering has been validated, and only the affected component of the offering becomes invalidated. Thus, the owner has fulfilled his obligation and received atonement. If all the blood is disqualified, however, it has the effect of disqualifying the entire offering by default, since the *avodah* essential to validating the offering can never be satisfactorily completed.

☞ Minchah Offerings

These three disqualifications apply to *minchah* offerings as well. However, the point at which a *minchah* offering becomes susceptible to them differs in their case. Since *minchah* offerings are sanctified in a כֵּלִי שְׁרָת, sacred vessel, even before their *avodah* begins with *kemitzah*, they become susceptible to these three disqualifications at that moment (*Me'ilah* 2:8).^[1] [The animal offerings, by contrast, are not subjected to

1. Whether sanctification in a כֵּלִי שְׁרָת suffices to make a *minchah* subject to the disqualification for leaving the Temple Courtyard is the subject of a wide-ranging dispute between Rashi and Tosafos. According to Tosafos (*Zevachim* 20b, *Menachos* 9a), a *minchah* does not become disqualified by leaving the Courtyard until after its *kemitzah*, though they

1. יוֹצֵא, Leaving Its Area

An animal or bird designated as an offering need not be kept in the Temple. Its slaughter, however, must take place in the Temple Courtyard, and once it has been slaughtered, its sacrificial parts may no longer be removed from the Courtyard. If they are removed, they become disqualified — i.e., the blood which has gone out can no longer be applied to the Altar, and the *emurin* (if they have gone out) cannot be burned on the Altar. Of course if the blood becomes disqualified, the rest of the offering must also become disqualified, because no animal or bird offering can be validated without its blood being properly applied to the Altar.

The meat of an offering is also disqualified if it leaves its prescribed area. Although the disqualification of the meat alone does not necessarily invalidate the offering as a whole,¹⁾ it does prohibit the meat from being eaten. In contrast to the blood and *emurin*, however, the meat of some offerings, such as *shelamim*, is not necessarily restricted to the Temple Courtyard, so that the disqualification for leaving varies according to the type of offering. The permitted area for the meat of the קָרְשִׁי קָרְשִׁים, *most-holy* offerings (see Section XIV-F), is the Temple Courtyard; consequently, it is disqualified by being removed from that Courtyard. The area permitted for eating the meat of קָרְשִׁים קְלִים, offerings of lesser holiness, is the entire city of Jerusalem; their meat, therefore, is not disqualified unless it is taken out of the city.

2. טֻמְאָה, Tumah-Contamination

טֻמְאָה, *tumah*, is a legal state of impurity or contamination that the Torah decrees for certain conditions or circumstances, such as a *tzaraas* affliction (chapters 13,14), the condition of being a *zav* or *zavah* (chapter 15), a human corpse (*Numbers* chapter 19), et al. [A full listing of these appears in the first chapter of Mishnah, *Keilim*.] *Tumah* can be transmitted from the person or object which is its source to other persons or objects, though the level of *tumah* becomes diminished with each transmission.

The primary legal impact of the state of *tumah* is to restrict that which is *tamei* from interacting with the sacred. An object which is contaminated with *tumah* may not be used in the sacrificial service. Thus, if the blood, meat, or *emurin* become *tamei*, they are disqualified.

1. If all the meat became invalidated by leaving its prescribed area after the application of the blood, the validity of the offering is unaffected. If it left before the application of the blood, there is a dispute between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua whether the blood may be applied to validate the offering and fulfill the owner's obligation even though there is no meat that can become permitted for consumption (*Pesachim* 34b, 77b). *Rambam* (*Hil. Pesulei HaMukdashin* 1:34) rules according to R' Yehoshua that the blood is not applied (אִם אֵין בָּשָׂר אֵין דָּם); however, even R' Yehoshua agrees that if it was applied, the offering is, after the fact, valid.

the additional sanctification of a קלי שרת until they are slaughtered,^[1] and their susceptibility to these disqualifications, therefore, does not begin until the slaughter.]

These disqualifications apply both to the *minchah* as a whole (before its *kemitzah*) and the *kometz* and remainder separately (after the *kemitzah*). If the *kometz* is disqualified, it cannot be burned on the Altar, and the *minchah* can therefore never be validated. If the remainder is disqualified, it may not be eaten, but the owner has fulfilled his obligation with the burning of the *kometz*.

E. Disqualifications of the Avodah

Offerings may also be disqualified because their *avodah* has not been properly performed. Thus, an offering can be disqualified by not having its slaughter or the reception of its blood performed in the right place (e.g., slaughtering an offering in the southern part of the Courtyard which should be slaughtered in the northern part of the Courtyard), or by its blood not being applied to the correct part of the Altar,^[2] or by a facet of its *avodah* being performed at night, or by disqualified persons. These disqualifications affect the entire offering.

F. Levels of Disqualification

An offering which has been completely disqualified may not be offered on the Altar — its blood may not be applied and its sacrificial parts may not be burned. Even if the blood was thrown on the Altar, no atonement is attained and the owner has not fulfilled his obligation. Consequently, the sacrificial parts may not be brought to the Altar for burning, nor may its meat be eaten.

אם עלו לא ירדו, Non-removal from the Altar

There are, however, a number of disqualifications whose invalidation is less than absolute and which, in spite of their disqualification, are considered to possess a degree of validity. This slight validity finds

agree that the other two disqualifications apply as soon as the *minchah* has been placed in a קלי שרת.

1. See Rashi to Menachos 101a, s.v. רמכלי שרת.

2. There is a dispute whether an application made to the wrong part of the Altar invalidates the offering completely, or whether only the meat and *emurin* are invalidated, but the owner has discharged his obligation and need not bring another offering [שלא במקומו במקומו דמי]. See Zevachim 26b.

expression in the following rule. If the *emurin* of these disqualified offerings were for some reason placed upon the Altar despite the prohibition to do so, they may not be removed from it, but must be burned on the Altar. This is known in Talmudic parlance as the rule of *אם עלו לא ירדו*, *once they ascend they are not removed*. [The Sages derive this rule exegetically from verse 6:2.] Needless to say, even in such a circumstance the offering as a whole is not considered to have been accepted; the meat may still not be eaten, and the owner has still not fulfilled his obligation.

Other disqualifications, however, are complete and necessitate the removal of their sacrificial parts from the Altar even if they were mistakenly placed upon it — *אם עלו ירדו* — *even if they ascend, they must be removed*. Animals ineligible to become offerings (sub-section B) are all of the class of completely disqualified offerings. Offerings disqualified during or after the *avodah* are generally in the category of less than complete disqualifications (see *Zevachim* chapter 9).

Levels of Sanctity

The first step in the sanctification of any object for Temple or sacrificial use is קדושת הִפָּה, *verbal sanctification*; i.e., the owner of the object declares the object to be consecrated. The level of sanctity it assumes depends on what he specifies in his declaration.

The term קָדֵשׁ, *holy* or *sacred*, embraces a number of different levels and types of holiness. Each level or type requires an act of consecration to inaugurate it. The following is a list of the major categories.

A. קדושת בֶּדֶק הַבַּיִת, Consecrated to the Temple

Literally, this means sanctified for the repair of the House, and it refers to property owned by the Temple treasury. When a person consecrates an object by verbally specifying that he intends this type of sanctity, the object is immediately transferred to the ownership of the Temple treasury. The object may be used for Temple purposes, sold by the administrator of the treasury (known as the גִּזְבָּן) with the proceeds going to the Temple treasury, or redeemed by the original owner. In the latter case a surcharge of one fifth is added. Most objects in this category are subject to the laws of קַעֲיִלָּה, the prohibition and penalty which apply to unlawful use of sacred property (see below, section XV). Typical of this type of consecration are animals unfit for offerings, real estate, and implements (27:11-27).

B. קדושת דָּמִים, Monetary Sanctity

A person may verbally designate money or objects for the purpose of buying an offering. The money or object assumes the sanctity of the offering for which it is designated, and anything subsequently bought with it automatically assumes that designation as well. If the object bought is fit to be offered, it automatically acquires קדושת הִנוּף, *physical sanctity* (see below).

Objects in this category can be redeemed, but until they are redeemed, they are subject to the laws of קַעֲיִלָּה (unlawful use of sacred property) if the offering for which they are designated is subject to them (see below).

Items of this sort are administered by the person who consecrated them,

since they are not Temple property but funds set aside for an individual's offerings. Of course, items consecrated to the Temple treasury also possess only monetary sanctity, but they are Temple property.

C. קדושת הגוף, *Physical Sanctity*

An object which is fit to be offered and which has been verbally designated as an offering attains קדושת הגוף, *physical sanctity*. It is now sanctified to be offered, and possesses the degree of sanctity necessary to progress to the next level of sanctity in which it actually becomes an offering. Similarly, an object fit for sacrifice which is purchased with money possessing monetary sanctity (see above) automatically attains קדושת הגוף, *physical sanctity*, as explained above.

An object at this level of sanctity cannot be redeemed or sold. The laws of *me'ilah* apply to it if it is in the classification of קדשי קדשים, *most-holy* (see sub-section F).

D. פסולי המוקדשין, *Disqualified Live Offerings*

If an animal offering becomes permanently blemished after having been consecrated, it falls to a lower level of sanctity. It may now be redeemed and used for non-sacred purposes (27:11), but it nevertheless retains vestiges of its earlier sacred status. Even after redemption its use is limited to slaughtering it and eating its meat. One may not use it for work, shear its wool, or use its milk (*Gemara, Temurah* 31a). However, if one consecrates an already blemished animal, it attains only קדושת נמים, *monetary sanctity*, and after redemption it reverts to regular *chullin* (non-sacred) status (*Bechoros* 2:2).

The *bechor* and *maaser* offerings differ in some respects. They attain פסולי המוקדשין status even if the blemish preceded their sanctification, e.g., if the *bechor* was born blemished or the tenth animal had a blemish (*ibid.*). On the other hand, they need not be redeemed, but may be slaughtered and eaten as soon as they are blemished — the *bechor* by the Kohen and the *maaser* by its owner.

The right to redeem a live disqualified offering is limited to an animal disqualified by a permanent blemish. If it becomes disqualified in some other manner [e.g., involvement in a transgression; see section XIII-B] it may not be used as an offering, but may also not be redeemed until it develops a blemish (*Temurah* 28b).

Bird offerings may not be redeemed even if they have become permanently blemished. The flour and oil of a *minchah* offering and the wine of נסכים (libations) may be redeemed if they become *tamei*, as long as

they have not yet been sanctified in a כְּלֵי שֶׁרֶת, sacred Temple vessel (Mishnah, *Menachos* 12:1).

E. Sanctification During the Avodah

At different stages of the *avodah*, the components of the offering receive additional sanctifications which enable the *avodah* to proceed. Commensurate with this, the additional sanctification exposes the offering to further disqualifications.

1. Sanctification by Slaughter

Before an animal or bird offering is slaughtered, it possesses only קְדוּשַׁת הַפֶּה, verbal sanctification. Although at this level the animal has the קְדוּשַׁת הַגּוּף, physical consecration, that designates it to be offered, it is not yet an actual offering. It is thus not required to remain within the Courtyard or to be used before nightfall. The level at which it actually becomes an offering, subject to all the strictures inherent in this classification, is attained through the slaughter of the animal. At this point, the offering's components become subject to the disqualification of לִינָה, being left beyond their prescribed time, the disqualification of *tumah* (if they are touched by anyone contaminated with the slightest trace of *tumah*), and the disqualification of יוֹצֵא, being removed from their permitted area, as explained in section XIII-D.

2. Sanctification by a כְּלֵי שֶׁרֶת, Sacred Vessel

Most facets of the *avodah* necessitate the use of utensils, such as the vessel that receives the blood of an animal offering. It is essential to the offering's validity that they be כְּלֵי שֶׁרֶת, sacred [lit., service] vessels. Use of a sacred vessel is not merely protocol; in many instances it adds yet another level of sanctification to the substance placed in it. This is the case with the offering's blood, which becomes fit for application to the Altar only if received in a sacred vessel as it gushes from the neck. If one received the blood of an animal offering in a non-sacred vessel, the blood is not valid for application. Even if the blood is subsequently transferred to a כְּלֵי שֶׁרֶת, sacred vessel, it remains invalid, since it was not initially received in a כְּלֵי שֶׁרֶת (*Zevachim* 2:1).

The sacred vessels themselves were specifically consecrated for this purpose. Their status is one of equivalency to קְדוּשַׁת הַגּוּף, physical sanctity; they cannot be redeemed (Mishnah, *Me'ilah* 5:3; see *Gemara, Menachos* 101a).

For *minchah* offerings, sacred vessels play yet another role. Placing the flour in a כְּלֵי שֶׁרֶת, sacred vessel, before the *kemitzah* consecrates the

minchah to the level of sanctity attained through slaughter in an animal offering. It therefore renders it susceptible to the strictures inherent in that level of sanctity. When the *kometz* is taken from the *minchah*, it must again be sanctified in a *כלי שרת*. This is akin to sanctifying an animal offering's blood in a *כלי שרת* before applying it to the Altar (*Gemara, Menachos* 13b).

F. קדשי קדשים / Most-Holy Offerings, and קדשים קלים / Offerings of Lesser Holiness

All offerings are divided into two classes: קדשי קדשים, *most-holy offerings*, and קדשים קלים, *offerings of lesser holiness*. These classifications are relative ones, since both categories possess the sanctity of offerings. They are based on the relative stringency of the laws governing each class of offerings.

1. קדשי קדשים – Most-Holy Offerings

This category is made up of the *chatas*, *olah*, *asham* and communal *shelamim*. Most-holy offerings are distinguished by the fact that their meat is either not eaten at all (as in the case of the inner *chatas* and *olah*) or it is eaten only by Kohanim (as in the case of the outer *chatas*, *asham*, and the communal *shelamim* of Shavuot), and only within the confines of the Temple Courtyard; if the meat is removed from the Courtyard, it is disqualified. Another stringency that applies to this category is that these offerings must all be slaughtered in the northern part of the Courtyard.^[1]

All bird-offerings, *minchah* offerings and *nesachim* (libations) are קדשי קדשים, most-holy offerings.

2. קדשים קלים – Offerings of Lesser Holiness

This category consists of the personal *shelamim*, *todah*, *nazir's ram*, *bechor*, *maaser*, and *pesach* offerings. These offerings are governed by certain leniencies relative to the קדשי קדשים, most-holy offerings: They may be slaughtered anywhere in the Courtyard, may be eaten even by non-Kohanim (except for the breast and thigh portions of the *shelamim* and *todah* and *nazir's ram*); and may be eaten throughout Jerusalem.^[2]

1. Additionally, they are all subject to the law of *me'ilah* (the penalty for personal use of sacred items) even before their slaughter; see 5:14-16 and section XV).

2. A further leniency is that these offerings are not subject to the *me'ilah* penalty until their blood is applied to the Altar after which only their sacrificial parts are elevated to the status of most-holy and therefore become subject to *me'ilah* (*Mishnah, Me'ilah* 1:4).

Me'ilah/Misappropriation of Sacred Property

It is forbidden to use consecrated property for personal benefit. The act of doing so is referred to as *מעילה*. If one misappropriates or uses a consecrated object for his personal benefit inadvertently, he must atone for his sin with an *asham* offering — the *אָשָׁם מַעֲלִילֹת*, *me'ilah asham* — as well as make restitution and add a fifth (see 5:14-16). This transgression is known as *מעילה*, *me'ilah*, literally, *betrayal* (see *Targum* to 5:15).

Almost all types of property consecrated to the Temple treasury are subject to this law. In the case of animals consecrated to be offerings, one is liable to the *asham* of *me'ilah* only for the misappropriation of that which has *קָדְשֵׁי קָדְשִׁים*, most-holy status (see section XIV-F); misappropriation of *קָדְשִׁים קְלִים*, less-holy offerings, for personal use, although against Biblical law, is not subject to the *asham* offering of *me'ilah*. This may be seen from the fact that the term the Torah uses in the context of *me'ilah* is *קָדְשֵׁי ה'*, the consecrated things of HASHEM, implying that the *me'ilah* penalty applies only to consecrated things reserved exclusively for Hashem. *קָדְשִׁים קְלִים* offerings do not meet this criterion, because of the share of the animal's meat that eventually comes to the owner. However, as explained above, the *emurin* (sacrificial parts) of even these offerings have *קָדְשֵׁי קָדְשִׁים*, most-holy, classification once the offering's blood has been applied, and they therefore become subject to *me'ilah* at that point. Conversely, any part of an offering — even of a *קָדְשִׁי קָדְשִׁים* offering — which is permitted for eating, even though it is reserved exclusively for Kohanim, is exempted from *me'ilah* law after its blood has been applied (since it is no longer exclusively for Hashem). Therefore, if the meat of a *chatas* or *asham* is eaten even by a non-Kohen, there is no *me'ilah* penalty (though it is certainly forbidden for him to eat it).

שְׁחוּטֵי חוּץ,

Offering Outside the Temple

A. The Prohibition

Implicit in the *mitzvah* to offer sacrifices in the Temple is a ban against performing the *avodah* with a duly consecrated offering outside the Temple. If one does offer sacrifices outside, he also transgresses a negative precept which is punishable by *kares* (17:4,7,9). If the transgression was unintentional (בְּשׁוּגָה), he must atone for it with a *chatas* offering. Offering non-sacred animals or their parts outside the Temple is not included in this prohibition and some disqualified offerings are also excluded.

B. בָּמוֹת, Bamos

During certain periods of history, the Torah permitted the use of private altars for making certain types of offerings outside the Sanctuaries of those eras. Such a private altar is called a *בָּמָה*, *bamah* (pl. *bamos*).

Before the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was erected, *bamos* were permissible. Once the *Mishkan* was built, *bamos* became forbidden until the Jewish people entered *Eretz Yisrael*. During the fourteen years in which the *Mishkan* stood in *Gilgal*, *bamos* were again permitted. When a more permanent Sanctuary was built at *Shiloh* to replace the *Mishkan*, *bamos* were again forbidden. This period lasted 369 years. When *Shiloh* was destroyed during a war with the Philistines, *bamos* were again permissible for a period of 57 years, until the *Beis Hamikdash* (Holy Temple) was built by King Solomon in Jerusalem. Once the *Beis Hamikdash* was completed, the period of *bamah* permissibility came to an end forever (*Deut.* 12:9; *Zevachim* 14:4-8).

Structure of the Mishkan and Altar

Many of the rules described in the previous sections make reference to the structure of the Altar and the layout of the *Mishkan*. To understand this properly, a brief description is necessary. [A more detailed description will appear in the commentary to *Shemos/Exodus*.]

A. The Mishkan

The *Mishkan* was the Tabernacle compound used by the Jewish nation during the forty years in the wilderness. Since they did not stay at one site throughout this period, the Tabernacle had to be transportable. Nevertheless, its overall design corresponded closely to that of the permanent Temple later built in Jerusalem.

The *Mishkan* was located at the center of the Israelite camp. It was in the form of a central structure set in the middle of a compound. The compound was surrounded by a partition made of curtains fastened to a frame; this enclosure is referred to as the חֲצֵר הַמִּשְׁכָּן, *Courtyard of the Mishkan* (or Temple Courtyard). The Courtyard was one hundred cubits long by fifty cubits wide. All offerings and the activities associated with them were made within the confines of this Courtyard. In the middle of this Courtyard stood the main Altar — the מִזְבֵּחַ הַחֵיצוֹן, *Outer Altar*; the blood of the most offerings was applied here, and the sacrificial parts of all offerings were burned here.

On the eastern half of the Courtyard, a wooden structure was erected which housed the קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשִׁים, *Holy of Holies*. This was known as the אוֹהֶל מוֹעֵד [*Ohel Moed*], Tent of Meeting. [Though it was a wooden structure, it was not roofed with wood but covered, tent-like, with hides and fabric.] The *Ohel Moed* was ten cubits wide by thirty cubits long. The front two-thirds of this tent (20x10 cubits) was the קֹדֶשׁ, *Holy*, in which stood the מִזְבֵּחַ הַקְטָרֶת, *Incense Altar*; the שֻׁלְחָן, [*Shulchan*], Table; and the מְנוֹרָה, *Menorah*. The rear third of this tent comprised the קֹדֶשׁ הַקֹּדֶשִׁים, *Holy of Holies* (10x10 cubits) in which the אֲרוֹן, *Holy Ark*, stood. The only person ever to enter this area was the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur.

As noted above, the same essential design prevailed in the Temple in Jerusalem, where the temporary structures of curtains and wood were

replaced by massive stone walls. Although the dimensions were different, the legal boundaries were the same. The city of Jerusalem replaced the camp as the outermost area of Temple holiness (for eating קָרְשִׁים קָלִים, offerings of the lesser holiness classification), the walls of the Main Courtyard replaced the curtains of the *Mishkan's* Courtyard for the area in which the *avodah* may be performed (and in which the קָרְשֵׁי קָרְשִׁים, most-holy offerings may be eaten), and the בֵּית, *House*, replaced the *Ohel Moed*.

B. The Altar

Although the Torah gives the dimensions of the outer Altar in the *Mishkan* in the book of *Exodus* (27:1-8), there is a dispute between the *Tannaim* R' Yose and R' Yehudah as to how to interpret these verses (*Zevachim* 59b-60a). This commentary follows the view of R' Yose (inasmuch as *Rashi's* seems to favor this view in his commentary to the verses). According to this view, the Altar was a square of five cubits by five cubits, and was ten cubits high. [The top surface of the Altar upon which the fires burned was actually only nine cubits from the ground; the tenth cubit was the height of the four קַרְנוֹת, horns that stood atop the four corners of the Altar.] The upper and lower halves of the Altar were denoted by a cubit-high copper grating that began at a height of five cubits from the ground; blood applications that had to be made on the lower part of the Altar had to be made below this line. A ramp led from the floor of the Courtyard to the top of the Altar.

Table of Biblical Measures

The following is a table of the measures most commonly used in the Book of *Vayikra* and throughout this volume. The table will present the Torah's scale of measurements together with estimates of these measurements in contemporary terms. Because of the wide range of opinion on how large these measures actually are, each conversion will present the minimum and maximum estimates of these equivalents.^[1]

[Note: As with contemporary measures, liquid measures in the Torah are measurements of volume. However, unlike the modern standard, dry measures in the Torah are not given in terms of weight, but in terms of volume. Thus, an *ephah* of flour, for example, is the amount of flour that fills an *ephah* container.]

A. Liquid Measures

1. לֹג, *log*

The basic unit of liquid measure is the *log*. The *log* is equal to the volume of six average-sized eggs. This would translate into between 12 and 21 liquid ounces. [The well-known measure — *revi'is*, literally, a 'quarter' — refers to a quarter of a *log*. Though widely used in the Mishnah and Talmud as the amount needed for *Kiddush* and the amount needed for all Scriptural requirements where "drinking" is called for, it is not explicitly mentioned in the *Chumash*.]

2. הֵין, *hin*

The *hin* is equal to 12 *log* (or seventy-two eggs). This comes to between 4.5 and 7.95 quarts. The Torah also frequently refers to the quarter-, third-, and half-*hin* measures (see *Numbers* 15:1-10); these are 3 *log*, 4 *log*, and 6 *log* respectively.

1. It is generally assumed that the smallest measure for a רביעית [*revi'is*], quarter-*log*, is approximately 3 ounces, while in the opinion of *Chazon Ish* it is approximately 5.3 ounces. The conversions in the table are based on these two numbers.

B. Dry Measures

1. אֵפָה, **ephah**

The *ephah* is equal to 432 egg volumes,^[1] or between 27 and 47.7 quarts. [As noted above, dry measures are also measures of volume, therefore, liquid-measure equivalents are a more accurate way of defining them. An *ephah* of flour is the amount that would fill a 27 (to 47) quart container.]

2. עֶשְׂרוֹן, **issaron**

The word *issaron* means literally a *tenth*, specifically a tenth of an *ephah*. Thus, an *issaron* is equal to 43.2 eggs, or 2.7-4.8 quarts. An *issaron* of flour, therefore, is the amount of flour that fills a container this size. [It is generally given as 3-5 pounds of white flour.]

3. עֹמֶר, **omer**

An *omer* is equal to an *issaron* (Exodus 16:36).

4. חֹמֶר, **chomer**

A *chomer* (see 27:16) is ten *ephah* or 100 *issaron*. It is also equivalent to 30 *seah* or a *kor*.

5. סֵאָה, **seah**

The *seah* is a measure not much used in *Chumash* (but see *Genesis* 18:6), but widely used in the *Mishnah* and *Talmud*. The *ephah* is equal to 3 *seah*; thus a *seah* is one-third of an *ephah*.

1. An *ephah* is equal to 6 *hin*; thus, the number 432 is equal to 6x72. Although the *hin* is a liquid measure, both the liquid and dry measures of the Torah are measures of volume.

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Charts

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⚡ Procedures for the Animal Offerings

The category of זבחים, *slaughtered offerings*, consists of animals slaughtered in the Temple and offered either partially or totally on the Altar. All such offerings share the essential common features; the different types are distinguished from one another by the certain details of their offering, such as where in the Courtyard the animal may be slaughtered, where and how its blood is applied to the Altar and in how many applications, whether or not it is eaten, by whom, and for how long. The following chart delineates these distinctions.

Type of Offering	Classification	Place of Slaughter	Site of Blood Application	Type of Application	Number of Applications	Disposition of Meat	Place for Eating	Time for Eating
חטאות קניניות של יום הכיפורים <i>inner chataos of Yom Kippur</i> (ch. 16)	קדשי קדשים most-holy	Courtyard / north	Holy of Holies, Holy, Inner Altar	הנאה, sprinkling מטן אצבע daubing by finger	43 ⁽¹⁾	burned outside the Camp ⁽⁶⁾	not eaten	not eaten
שאר חטאות קניניות <i>other inner chataos</i> (ch. 4)	קדשי קדשים most-holy	Courtyard / north	Holy, Inner Altar	הנאה, sprinkling מטן אצבע daubing by finger	11	burned outside the Camp ⁽⁶⁾	not eaten	not eaten
חטאת חיצונה <i>outer chataas</i>	קדשי קדשים most-holy	Courtyard / north	horns of Outer Altar	daubing by finger	4	eaten by Kohanim	Courtyard	1 day and night
עולה <i>elevation offering</i> (ch. 1)	קדשי קדשים most-holy	Courtyard / north	N.E. and S.W. corners of Outer Altar, lower part	זריקה throwing	2 equivalent to 4	burned on Outer Altar	not eaten	not eaten
אשם <i>guilt offering</i> (ch. 5)	קדשי קדשים most-holy	Courtyard / north	N.E. and S.W. corners of Outer Altar, lower part	זריקה throwing	2 equivalent to 4	eaten by male Kohanim	Courtyard	1 day and night

שלמי צבור ⁽²⁾ <i>communal peace offering</i> (23:19)	קדשי קדשים most-holy	Courtyard / north	N.E. and S.W. corners of Outer Altar, lower part	וריקה throwing	2 equivalent to 4	eaten by male Kohanim	Courtyard	1 day and night
שלמי חיד <i>personal peace offering</i>	קדשים קלים lesser holiness	Courtyard / anywhere	N.E. and S.W. corners of Outer Altar, lower part	וריקה throwing	2 equivalent to 4	breast and thigh eaten by Kohanim and their households / remainder by anyone	anywhere in the camp ⁽³⁾	2 days and intervening night
תודה ⁽⁴⁾ <i>thanksgiving offering</i> (ch.7)	קדשים קלים lesser holiness	Courtyard / anywhere	N.E. and S.W. corners of Outer Altar, lower part	וריקה throwing	2 equivalent to 4	breast and thigh eaten by Kohanim and their households / remainder by anyone	anywhere in the camp ⁽³⁾	1 day and night
קבור ⁽⁵⁾ <i>firstborn offering</i> (Num. 18:17,18)	קדשים קלים lesser holiness	Courtyard / anywhere	lower part of Altar wall ⁽⁶⁾	שפיכה pouring	1	eaten by Kohanim and their households	anywhere in the camp ⁽³⁾	2 days and intervening night
מעשר <i>tithe offering</i> (27:32)	קדשים קלים lesser holiness	Courtyard / anywhere	lower part of Altar wall ⁽⁶⁾	שפיכה pouring	1	eaten by anyone	anywhere in the camp ⁽³⁾	2 days and intervening night
פסח <i>pesach offering</i> (Ex. ch. 12)	קדשים קלים lesser holiness	Courtyard / anywhere	lower part of Altar wall ⁽⁶⁾	שפיכה pouring	1	eaten by anyone who has registered	anywhere in the camp ^{(3) (7)}	1 night (until midnight)

1. This represents the combined total for both the bull and the he-goat of Yom Kippur. According to one opinion there were 47.

2. There is a question whether this offering was made in the Wilderness (see *Menachos* 4:3).

3. When the Temple was built, this became anywhere in Jerusalem.

4. The *nazir's* ram is identical to the *todah* except that its right front leg (וריק) is also given to the Kohen (*Numbers* 6:19,20).

5. There is a dispute whether the *bechor* offering applied in the Wilderness (*Bechoros* 4b).

6. Any wall of the Altar which is above the *יסוד*, base, is valid.

7. The *Pesach* was offered only the first year in the Wilderness.

8. When the Temple was built, this became outside of Jerusalem.

📋 Listing of all the Animal Offerings

The following chart lists all the circumstances which call for animal offerings, and details what type of animal is used for each, whether it is a male or female (M/F), communal or personal offering (C/P), and obligatory or voluntary (O/V). These are all grouped according to their general classifications, such as *chatas*, *olah*, etc.

lamb, כֶּבֶשׂ – from the eighth day^[1] after birth till the first birthday

kid, שְׁעִיר עִזִּים – from the eighth day^[1] after birth till the first birthday^[2]

calf, עֵגֶל – from the eighth day^[1] till the second birthday

ram, אֵיל – from the beginning of the fourteenth month till the second birthday

bull, פָּר כֶּן בָּקָר – from the first birthday till the third birthday

goat, עֵז – from the eighth day^[1] after birth till the second birthday

cattle, בָּקָר – from the eighth day^[1] after birth till the third birthday

1. But preferably after the thirtieth day.

2. See Mishnah Parah 1:4, Sifra to Lev. 4:28. As to Rambam's ruling on this matter, we have followed the view of Kesef Mishneh as per his emendation of Rambam, Maaseh HaKorbanos 1:4 and as interpreted by Har Hamoriah and Aruch HaShulchan HaAssid 63:24-25.

Type of Offering	Occasion	C / P	Type of Animal	Gender	O / V
INNER CHATAS	Communal Yom Kippur	C	Kid	M	O
	Kohen Gadol Yom Kippur	P	Bull	M	O
	Chatas for Communal Error	C	Bull	M	O
	Chatas for Communal Idolatry	C	Kid	M	O
	Kohen Gadol's Chatas	P	Bull	M	O

OUTER CHATAS	Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh, the Three Festivals, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur	C	Kid	M	O
	With Two Loaves of Shavuot	C	Kid	M	O
	Personal Sin, Variable Chatas	P	Kid or Lamb	F	O
	Chatas for Personal Idolatry	P	Kid	F	O
	Nasi's Chatas	P	Kid	M	O
	Nazir tahor and Metzora	P	Lamb	F	O
OLAH	Tamid (Daily Offering)	C	1 Lamb a.m. / 1 Lamb p.m.	M	O
	Mussaf of Shabbos	C	2 Lambs	M	O
	Mussaf of Rosh Chodesh, Pesach (7 days), Shavuot	C	2 Bulls, 1 Ram, 7 Lambs	M	O
	Mussaf of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur	C	1 Bull, 1 Ram, 7 Lambs	M	O
	Mussaf of Succos, days 1-7	C	13-7 Bulls, 2 Rams, 14 Lambs	M	O
	Mussaf of Shemini Atzeres	C	1 Bull, 1 Ram, 7 Lambs	M	O
	With Omer Offering	C	Lamb	M	O
	With Two Loaves of Shavuot	C	1 Bull, 2 Rams, 7 Lambs	M	O
	Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur	P	Ram	M	O
	Olas Re'iyah on 3 Festivals	P	Sheep, Goat or Cattle	M	O

Type of Offering	Occasion	C / P	Type of Animal	Gender	O / V
OLAH	Woman after Childbirth, Nazir tahir, Metzora	P	Lamb	M	O
	Communal Idolatry	C	Bull	M	O
	Convert	P	Sheep, Goat or Cattle	M	O
	Voluntary	P	Sheep, Goat or Cattle	M	V
	Kayitz HaMizbe'ach (offerings when Altar is idle)	C	Sheep, Goat or Cattle	M	V
ASHAM	Doubtful Sin, Me'ilah, Theft, Betrothed Maidservant	P	Ram	M	O
	Nazir tamei, Metzora	P	Lamb	M	O
SHELAMIM	With Two Loaves of Shavuot	C	2 Lambs	M	O
	Chagigah and Simchah on the Three Festivals	P	Sheep, Goat, or Cattle	M/F	O
	Nazir tahir	P	Ram	M	O
	Voluntary	P	Sheep, Goat or Cattle	M/F	V
	Todah	P	Sheep, Goat or Cattle	M/F	V
	Bechor	P	Sheep, Goat or Cattle	M	O
	Maaser	P	Sheep, Goat or Cattle	M/F	O
	Pesach	P	Lamb or Kid	M	O

🕊 Bird Offerings

In contrast to the animal offerings, bird offerings are slaughtered by the procedure known as *melikah*, in which the *Kohen* punctures the back of the bird's neck with his thumbnail and cuts through to the front. In another departure, the blood is not caught in a vessel but is applied to the Altar directly from the bird's body. The following chart highlights the differences between the bird *chatas* and the bird *olah*.

	חטאת <i>chatas</i>	עולה <i>olah</i>
Classification	קדשי קדשים most-holy	קדשי קדשים most-holy
Place of Melikah	floor of the Courtyard, near southwest corner of Altar ^[1]	top of the Altar, southeast or southwest corner
Type of Melikah	either windpipe or esophagus ^[2]	both windpipe and esophagus
Site of Blood Application	lower part of southwest corner of Altar	upper wall of Altar
Type of Blood Applications	הנאה, <i>sprinkling</i> ^[3] and מצוי, <i>draining</i> ^[4]	מצוי, <i>draining</i>
Disposition of Meat	Eaten by Kohanim	burned on Altar
Place for Eating	Courtyard	not eaten
Time for Eating	1 day and night	not eaten

1. However, it is valid even if he slaughters it near another area of the Altar.
2. Cutting both invalidates the bird *chatas*; by contrast, the bird *olah* is not valid *unless* both are cut.
3. The sprinkling is done directly from the neck of the bird, not by finger.
4. This is a procedure in which the neck of the bird is pressed against the Altar wall to drain the blood.

🥞 Minchah Offerings

Minchah offerings come in many forms, but they all share certain features. All consist primarily of flour, all have at least a part offered on the Altar, while some are burned in the entirety on the Altar. Of those not entirely burned, the part removed from the *minchah* and burned is known as the *kometz*; the remainder of the *minchah* is eaten by the Kohanim. Most have added to them a measure of a substance called *levonah* (frankincense) which is also burned on the Altar. Some *minchah* offerings are fried or baked before being offered; the resulting loaves are then crumbled [פְּחִיתָה] and the *kometz* is taken from the pieces. A *minchah* may be either a communal or personal offering (C/P), voluntary or obligatory.

	Type of Minchah	Type of Flour	Quantity of Flour	Quantity of Oil	Levonah	Preparation	Offering	C/P
<i>V</i>	סֶלֶת, <i>fine flour</i>	wheat	1-60 issaron ^[1]	1 log per issaron ^[2]	yes	mixed with oil ^[3]	<i>kometz</i> to Altar, remainder to Kohen	P
<i>O</i>	מַחְבַּת, <i>machavas</i>	wheat	1-60 issaron ^[1]	1 log per issaron ^[2]	yes	mixed with oil, fried on a griddle	<i>kometz</i> to Altar, remainder to Kohen	P
<i>L</i>	מַרְחֶשֶׁת, <i>marcheshes</i>	wheat	1-60 issaron ^[1]	1 log per issaron ^[2]	yes	mixed with oil, fried in pan	<i>kometz</i> to Altar, remainder to Kohen	P
<i>U</i>	חָלָלוֹת, <i>challos</i>	wheat	1-60 issaron ^[1]	1 log per issaron ^[2]	yes	mixed with oil, baked in oven	<i>kometz</i> to Altar, remainder to Kohen	P
<i>N</i>	רֶקִיקִים, <i>rekikim</i>	wheat	1-60 issaron ^[1]	1 log per issaron ^[2]	yes	baked in oven, oil smeared on baked wafers	<i>kometz</i> to Altar, remainder to Kohanim	P
<i>T</i>	מִנְחַת כֹּהֵן, <i>Kohen's minchah</i>	wheat	1-60 issaron ^[1]	1 log per issaron ^[2]	yes	any of the above	burned entirely on Altar	P

O B L I G A T O R Y	חֲכִיטֵי כֹהֵן גָּדוֹל (מִנְחַת כֹּהֵן קָדִישׁ), <i>chavitin</i> <i>of the Kohen Gadol</i>	wheat	1 issaron	3 log	yes	mixed with oil, scalded in hot water, baked and fried	burned entirely on Altar, 1/2 in morning, 1/2 in afternoon	P
	מִנְחַת חֵינֶכֶךְ <i>induction minchah</i> <i>of Kohen</i>	wheat	1 issaron	3 log	yes	mixed with oil, scalded in hot water, baked and fried	burned entirely on Altar	P
	מִנְחַת חוֹסֵא <i>sinner's minchah</i>	wheat	1 issaron	none	no	raw flour	<i>kometz</i> to Altar remainder to Kohanim	P
	מִנְחַת קְנָאוֹת <i>jealousy minchah / sotah</i>	barley	1 issaron	none	no	raw flour	<i>kometz</i> to Altar remainder to Kohanim	P
	מִנְחַת הָעֹמֶר <i>omer minchah</i>	barley	1 issaron	1 log	yes	mixed with oil ^[3]	<i>kometz</i> to Altar remainder to Kohanim	C
	מִנְחַת נֶסֶחִים <i>minchas nesachim</i>	wheat	3 issaron / bull 2 issaron / ram 1 issaron / lamb	6 log / bull 4 log / ram 3 log / lamb	no	mixed with oil ^[3]	burned entirely on Altar	C/P
	מִנְחַת נֶסֶחִים הַבָּא עִם הָעֹמֶר <i>minchas nesachim</i> <i>accompanying the omer</i>	wheat	2 issaron	3 log	no	mixed with oil ^[3]	burned entirely on Altar	C

1. A person may donate as much flour for a voluntary *minchah* as he wants, but the quantity must always be in multiples of an issaron. Moreover, though one may donate even 1000 issaron, a maximum of 60 issaron may be offered in one vessel as a single *minchah*-offering. Any flour over that amount becomes one or more additional offerings.

2. This is subject to a dispute of *Tannaim*, with R' Eliezer ben Yaakov ruling that up to 60 issaron receive only on log of oil. Rambam rules according to the *Tanna Kamma* that one log is required for each issaron.

3. The flour, however, was neither fried nor baked.

Non-Altar Baked Offerings

Of the regular *minchah* -offerings delineated in the previous chart, at least a part of them are burned on the Altar. There are also four kinds of baked products which figure in the sacrificial service of which no part is burned on the Altar. These are all joined to some other substance or offering, whose *avodah* serves for them as well, and permits them for consumption. All of these are made of wheat flour, but only one (לֶחֶם הַפָּנִים) has *levonah*, though this is kept separately from the breads. All are baked in an oven.

Type of Offering	Quantity of Flour	Type of Loaves	Number of Loaves	Amount of Flour in each Loaf	Associated Offering	Disposition of Bread
לֶחֶם הַשֹּׁהַב Show Bread	24 <i>issaron</i>	unleavened, specially shaped	12	2 <i>issaron</i>	שְׁנֵי כוּיכֵי לֶבֶנָה Two spoonfuls of <i>levonah</i>	Eaten by Kohanim
שְׁתֵּי הַלֶּחֶם Two Loaves of Shavuot	2 <i>issaron</i>	leavened, specially shaped	2	1 <i>issaron</i>	כִּבְשֵׁי עֶזְרָה Two <i>shelamim</i> lambs of Shavuot	Eaten by Kohanim
לֶחֶם תּוֹדָה Todah Breads	20 <i>issaron</i>	חֶמֶץ/ <i>chametz</i> , leavened bread חָלָלוֹת/ <i>challos</i> , unleavened loaves רֶקִיקִים/ <i>rekikim</i> , unleavened wafers רֵבּוּחָה/ <i>revuchah</i> , scalded loaves	10 10 10 10	1 <i>issaron</i> 1/3 <i>issaron</i> 1/3 <i>issaron</i> 1/3 <i>issaron</i>	תּוֹדָה <i>Todah</i>	4 Breads (one of each kind) given to Kohanim remainder eaten by owner and guests
לֶחֶם אֵיל נָזִיר Bread accompanying Nazir's Ram	6 2/3 <i>issaron</i>	חָלָלוֹת/ <i>challos</i> , unleavened loaves רֶקִיקִים/ <i>rekikim</i> , unleavened wafers	10 10	1/3 <i>issaron</i> 1/3 <i>issaron</i>	אֵיל נָזִיר <i>Nazir's Ram</i>	2 Breads (one of each kind) given to Kohanim remainder eaten by <i>Nazir</i> and guests

Amounts of the Minchas Nesachim

The *minchas nesachim* is the *minchah* and *nesachim* (wine libation) brought to accompany all of the *olah* and *shelamim* offerings as well as the *chata*s and *asham* of the *metzora*. The Torah (*Numbers* 15:1-16) requires different amounts of flour and oil for the *minchah*, and wine for the *nesachim*, for different types of animals.

The *minchas nesachim* of the bull is the same for all cattle, whether male or female, adult or young. Only in the case of sheep does the Torah differentiate requiring a special *minchas nesachim* for the adult male sheep (ram). Female sheep are treated the same as lambs, as are all goats, even the adult male (*Rambam, Maaseh HaKorbanos* 2:4).

	flour – סֶלֶת	oil – שֶׁקֶן	wine – יַיִן
Bull – בָּקָר	3 issaron	6 log (1/2 hin)	6 log (1/2 hin)
Ram – אֵיל	2 issaron	4 log (1/3 hin)	4 log (1/3 hin)
Lamb – כֶּבֶשׂ	1 issaron	3 log (1/4 hin)	3 log (1/4 hin)

📖 Multi-Part Offerings

Certain occasions and situations call for more than one offering. Every *olah* and *shelamim*, as well as the *asham* and *chatas* of a *metzora*, is accompanied by a *minchah* of flour and oil, and *nesachim* (libation) of wine. The size of the *minchah* varies according to the type of animal being offered: three *issaron* of flour and six *log* of oil for a bull, two *issaron* of flour and four *log* of oil for a ram, and one *issaron* of flour and three *log* of oil for a lamb or goat of any age.¹¹ The wine *nesachim* also varies: six *log* for a bull, four *log* for a ram, and three *log* for a lamb or goat. The *minchah* and *nesachim* of each offering must be offered separately; the numbers given before each bracket indicates the number of these offerings. The following is a listing of all the parts of each of these multi-part offerings.

עולה, olah: 1 cattle, sheep, or goat (young / mature);

minchah [for a bull: 3 *issaron* flour, 6 *log* oil]; *nesachim* [6 *log* wine]
[for a ram: 2 *issaron* flour, 4 *log* oil]; [4 *log* wine]
[for a lamb or goat: 1 *issaron* flour, 3 *log* oil]; [3 *log* wine]

שְׁלָמִים, shelamim: 1 cattle, sheep, or goat (young / mature);

minchah [for a bull: 3 *issaron* flour, 6 *log* oil]; *nesachim* [6 *log* wine]
[for a ram: 2 *issaron* flour, 4 *log* oil]; [4 *log* wine]
[for a lamb or goat: 1 *issaron* flour, 3 *log* oil]; [3 *log* wine]

תודה, todah: 1 cattle, sheep, or goat (young / mature);

40 loaves (10 *chametz*, 10 *challo*s, 10 *rekikim*, 10 *revuchos*)

minchah [for a bull: 3 *issaron* flour, 6 *log* oil]; *nesachim* [6 *log* wine]
[for a ram: 2 *issaron* flour, 4 *log* oil]; [4 *log* wine]
[for a lamb or goat: 1 *issaron* flour, 3 *log* oil]; [3 *log* wine]

תמיד, tamid: *olah* [2 lambs — one in the morning, one in the afternoon];

minchah 2 [1 *issaron* flour, 3 *log* oil]; *nesachim* [3 *log* wine]

בבשרי שְׁתֵּי הַלֶּחֶם / Two Loaves / Lambs of Shavuot (23:15-20):

chatas [1 kid]; *olah* [1 bull, 2 rams, 7 lambs]; *shelamim* [2 lambs];
two loaves of bread (*chametz*)

minchah 1 [3 *issaron* flour, 6 *log* oil]; *nesachim* 1 [6 *log* wine]
2 [2 *issaron* flour, 4 *log* oil]; 2 [4 *log* wine]
9 [1 *issaron* flour, 3 *log* oil]; 9 [3 *log* wine]

וילדת, woman who has given birth (12:6,8):

regular: *olah* [1 lamb]; *chatas* [1 bird];

minchah [1 *issaron* flour, 3 *log* oil]; *nesachim* [3 *log* wine]

poor: *olah* [1 bird]; *chatas* [1 bird];

מְצוּרָע, metzora (ch. 14):

regular: *chatas* [1 lamb]; *olah* [1 lamb]; *asham* [1 lamb]; 1 *log* oil;

minchah 3 [1 *issaron* flour, 3 *log* oil]; *nesachim* 3 [3 *log* wine]

poor: *asham* [1 lamb]; *chatas* [1 bird]; *olah* [1 bird]; 1 *log* oil;

minchah [1 *issaron* flour, 3 *log* oil]; *nesachim* [3 *log* wine]

זב, *zav* (15:14,15): *olah* [1 bird]; *chatas* [1 bird]

זבה, *zavah* (15:29,30): *olah* [1 bird]; *chatas* [1 bird]

זויר, *nazir* (Num. 6:13-21): *chatas* [1 lamb]; *olah* [1 lamb]; *shelamim* [1 ram];

10 *challos* (matzah loaves); 10 *rekikim* (wafers)

minchah 1 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil]; *nesachim* 1 [3 log wine]

1 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil]; 1 [4 log wine]

זויר קטא, *nazir tamei* (Num. 6:13-21):

asham [1 lamb]; *olah* [1 bird]; *chatas* [1 bird];

זכר של צבור, *matter hidden from the congregation* (4:13-21):

chatas [12 bulls];

עבודה נרה של צבור, *communal idolatry* (Num. 15:22-26):

chatas [12 kids]; *olah* [12 bulls];

minchah 12 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil]; *nesachim* 12 [6 log wine]

עמר, *omer* (23:9-14): *olah* [1 lamb];

minchas haomer [1 issaron barley, 1 log oil];

minchah 1 [2 issaron flour, 3 log oil]; *nesachim* [3 log wine]

Mussaf offerings^[2]

ראש חודש, *Rosh Chodesh*: *chatas* [1 goat] *olah* [2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs];

minchah 2 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil]; *nesachim* 2 [6 log wine]

1 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil]; 1 [4 log wine]

7 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil]; 7 [3 log wine]

פסח, *Pesach*: *chatas* [1 goat] *olah* [2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs];^[3]

minchah 2 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil]; *nesachim* 2 [6 log wine]

1 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil]; 1 [4 log wine]

7 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil]; 7 [3 log wine]

שקעת, *Shavuot*: *chatas* [1 goat] *olah* [2 bulls, 1 ram, 7 lambs];^[4]

minchah 2 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil]; *nesachim* 2 [6 log wine]

1 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil]; 1 [4 log wine]

7 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil]; 7 [3 log wine]

ראש השנה, *Rosh Hashanah*: *chatas* [1 goat] *olah* [1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs];

minchah 1 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil]; *nesachim* 1 [6 log wine]

1 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil]; 1 [4 log wine]

7 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil]; 7 [3 log wine]

יום הכפורים, *Yom Kippur*: *chatas* [1 goat] *olah* [1 bull, 1 ram, 7 lambs];

minchah 1 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil]; *nesachim* 1 [6 log wine]

1 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil]; 1 [4 log wine]

7 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil]; 7 [3 log wine]

סבוח, Succos (day 1): chatas [1 goat] olah [13 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs];			
<i>minchah</i> 13 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil];		<i>nesachim</i> 13 [6 log wine]	
2 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil];		2 [4 log wine]	
14 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil];		14 [3 log wine]	
(day 2): chatas [1 goat] olah [12 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs];			
<i>minchah</i> 12 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil];		<i>nesachim</i> 12 [6 log wine]	
2 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil];		2 [4 log wine]	
14 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil];		14 [3 log wine]	
(day 3): chatas [1 goat] olah [11 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs];			
<i>minchah</i> 11 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil];		<i>nesachim</i> 11 [6 log wine]	
2 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil];		2 [4 log wine]	
14 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil];		14 [3 log wine]	
(day 4): chatas [1 goat] olah [10 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs];			
<i>minchah</i> 10 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil];		<i>nesachim</i> 10 [6 log wine]	
2 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil];		2 [4 log wine]	
14 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil];		14 [3 log wine]	
(day 5): chatas [1 goat] olah [9 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs];			
<i>minchah</i> 9 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil];		<i>nesachim</i> 9 [6 log wine]	
2 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil];		2 [4 log wine]	
14 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil];		14 [3 log wine]	
(day 6): chatas [1 goat] olah [8 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs];			
<i>minchah</i> 8 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil];		<i>nesachim</i> 8 [6 log wine]	
2 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil];		2 [4 log wine]	
14 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil];		14 [3 log wine]	
(day 7): chatas [1 goat] olah [7 bulls, 2 rams, 14 lambs];			
<i>minchah</i> 7 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil];		<i>nesachim</i> 7 [6 log wine]	
2 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil];		2 [4 log wine]	
14 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil];		14 [3 log wine]	
שמיני עצרת, Shemini Atzeres: chatas [1 goat] olah [1 bull, 1 rams, 7 lambs];			
<i>minchah</i> 1 [3 issaron flour, 6 log oil];		<i>nesachim</i> 1 [6 log wine]	
1 [2 issaron flour, 4 log oil];		1 [4 log wine]	
7 [1 issaron flour, 3 log oil];		7 [3 log wine]	

1. A ram is an adult, male sheep. The *minchas nesachim* requirement for a female adult sheep, is the same as for a lamb. Among goats, no distinction is drawn between male / female or young / mature; all require only the *minchas nesachim* of a lamb. Similarly, no such distinctions are applied to cattle; all have the same requirements as a bull (*Rambam, Maaseh HaKorbanos* 2:4).
2. These *mussaf* offerings are in addition to the daily *tamid* offering.
3. On the second day of Pesach there is also the *omer* offering, listed above.
4. This is besides the שתי הלחם/בכש עצרת, *Two Loaves/Shavuot Lamb Offering*.

